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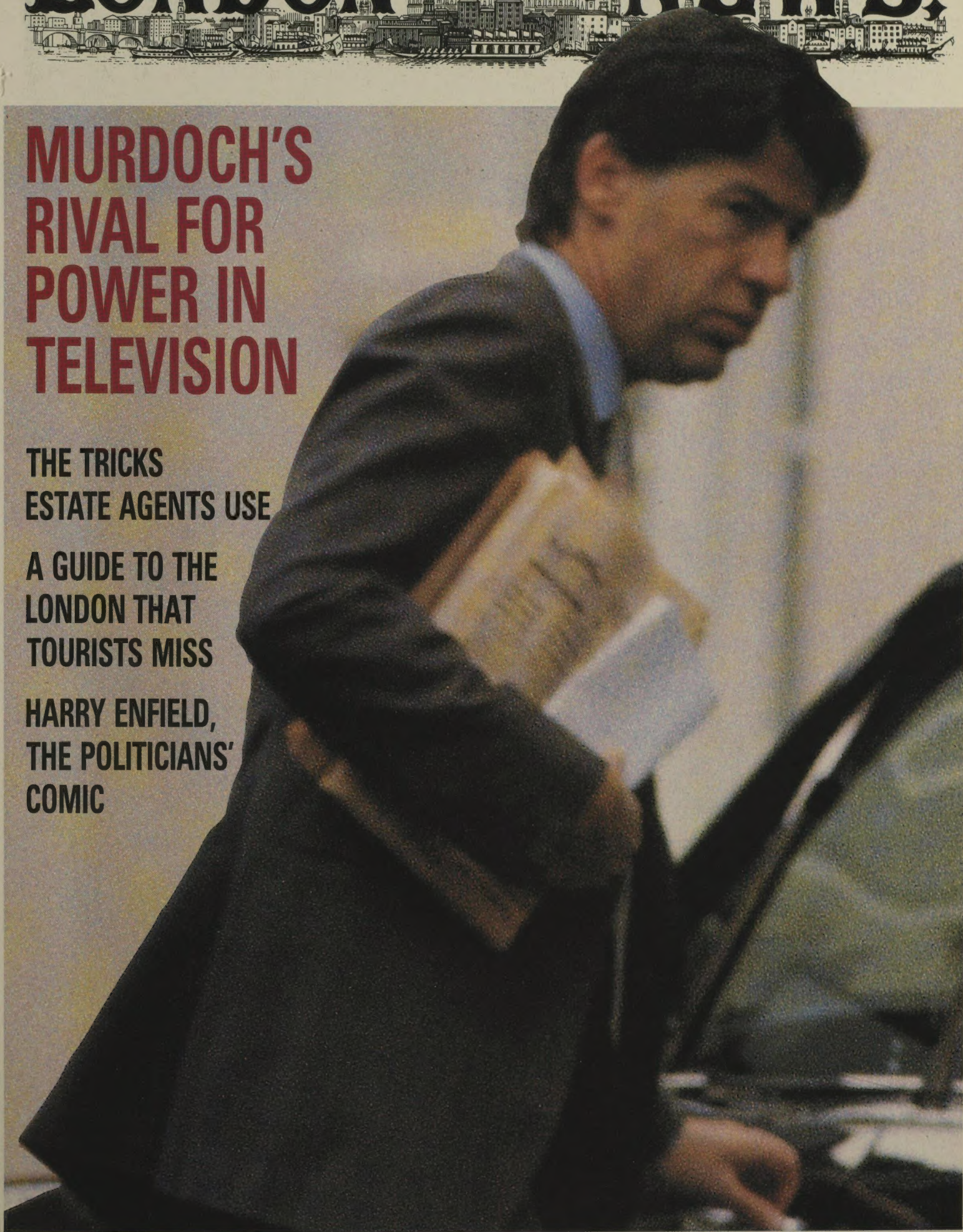


MURDOCH'S RIVAL FOR POWER IN TELEVISION

THE TRICKS
ESTATE AGENTS USE

A GUIDE TO THE
LONDON THAT
TOURISTS MISS

HARRY ENFIELD,
THE POLITICIANS'
COMIC



THE SECRETIVE MICHAEL GREEN PHOTOGRAPHED IN MAYFAIR, 25 MAY 1988



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THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

NUMBER 7080 VOLUME 276 JULY 1988

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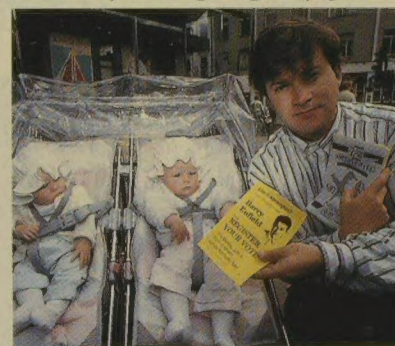
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Cover designed by Nick Cann. Photography by Carlos Guarita



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Editor's Letter

BUILDING AND BAD TASTE

On a cold evening in June the people who have been responsible for renovating London's Docklands held a very lavish ball. It was a remarkable sight, these well-heeled property folk in white tie and ball gowns being deposited on a blustery wharf near Tower Bridge to sip champagne as if they were on the Cap d'Antibes.

The ball was in aid of charity and there were many moving speeches, notably from the Duke of Westminster, to remind the guests that not far from the film studio which housed the ball there were children lying in an old hospital that was "positively Dickensian". It is doubtless a good thing that charities benefit when the very rich decide to celebrate one of their accomplishments but it would be daft to imagine that the children's hospital was more important than the earnest business of paying tribute to the property boom in Docklands and, for that matter, elsewhere in the capital.

Yet, one cannot help feeling that a great opportunity has been lost in Docklands because the emphasis has been on the development

attention, Mr Moore has been quietly piloting the Health and Medicines Bill through Parliament. If it remains intact, this bill gives Mr Moore and his successors power to prevent the publication of scientific research if it has been funded or part funded by the Department of Health and Social Security.

This is a bad thing for two simple reasons. First, it is a restraint on the freedom of speech and the free flow of ideas. Scientists do not make discoveries in isolation. They read each other's work and piece together solutions from research which, as often as not, is unrelated to their own lines of inquiry. The remarkable diversity of research which preceded the discovery of the super-conductor is an example of this. Mr Moore's bill may prevent a similar cross-fertilisation of ideas in the world of medicine.

Second, it may allow the minister of the time to suppress publication of research which is embarrassing to the government. Information about the health of people living or born near nuclear power stations, for example, could become subject to restriction.

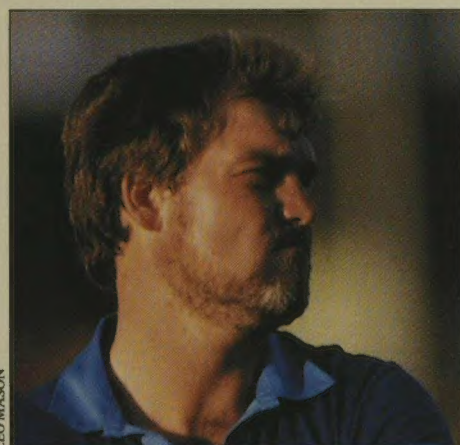
This month we publish a sharp assessment of *The Independent* newspaper in the Sacred Cow series. As the author, Richard Havercroft, points out, it is remarkable that the newspaper has achieved the status of Sacred Cow in so short a time. It is just under two years since Andreas Whittam Smith and his two collaborators launched *The Independent*, and yet it is now viewed by a section of the Establishment as the new paper of record.

Havercroft feels that this reputation should not go unchallenged and, in the spirit of the series, has set about the paper by questioning all its perceived qualities. Despite his tough approach, it must be said in defence of *The Independent* that it is among the fairest papers in Britain, which counts for a lot in the current climate.

The popular press in Britain has never been so nasty, so envious or so tasteless. In the last weeks the tabloid papers have "exposed" the Duchess of York's father, Major Ronald Ferguson, the television presenter, Frank Bough, and the captain of the England cricket team, Mike Gatting, and enjoyed themselves at the expense of the late talk-show host, Russell Harty.

They defend such actions by using the argument that people like Ferguson, Gatting and Bough should be paragons of morality because of the influential positions that they occupy. I wonder whether this applies to other men and women of influence: newspaper editors for example? If their lives were scrutinised in the same way, they might not feel quite so comfortable nor so gleeful during the humiliation of others. They are, after all, just as vulnerable, just as human and just as flawed ●

Tony Price



Mike Gatting: "exposed" by the popular press

rather than on architecture. It is important that this same spirit of hasty construction does not ruin the centre of the capital. Fleet Street is changing by the month, and massive constructions are planned at Cannon Street, Charing Cross and King's Cross, Alban Gate and City Plaza. The fates of the last four sites are sealed but it is important that the plans for the Cannon Street development, to be built on British Rail land between the station and the Thames, take into account the scale and style of the area. What is not needed is the sort of megalomaniac brutality demonstrated in Canary Wharf.

This great building boom, certainly the largest since the post-war reconstruction, needs controlling, not because everything already built is bad or wantonly domineering, but because big mistakes can be made and I would be disinclined to rely completely on the taste of the guests at the first Docklands Ball.

Does anyone share my profound suspicion that we could do a lot better without the Secretary of State for Health and Social Services, John Moore? While the major government business has been distracting our



THE 5 SERIES REFINED.

Neither of these tasks was an easy one.

The current 5 Series, though six years old, includes the world's fastest four door production saloon.

And as for producing some new form of performance saloon, could BMW engineers triumph where others have not?

Frankly, it would appear that they have.

Motoring journalists have not only been unstinting in their praise of the new 5 Series, but also unanimous.

It is no mere facelift. The designers began with a blank sheet of paper.

And not one body panel is carried over from the previous model.

STYLED BY WIND, AS MUCH AS BY HAND.

The new car has a drag coefficient as low as 0.30. With even the floor pan shaped, to provide increased grip at speed.

But though BMW reduced the car's wind resistance, they succeeded in retaining its character. As 'Car' magazine reported:

"...its styling is modern, purposeful and yet unmistakably BMW."

Some credit for the car's appearance must go to those who engineered the chassis. Its wider track, longer wheelbase and lower centre of gravity give the car a sleek low look.

They also contribute to the car's near perfect balance and behaviour.

Back to 'Car' magazine.

"In this class no other saloon offers a better blend of ride, roadholding and handling."

THE INTERIOR IS AS CLASSICALLY BMW AS THE EXTERIOR.

The dashboard is unashamedly driver-orientated. Without a single garish liquid crystal gauge in sight.

They may be fractionally more efficient in reacting to information, but BMW judge them rather less efficient in communicating it.

'Motor' obviously concurs. "Bereft of styling excesses and gimmicks, the display stands as an example of design purity and clarity."

"The 520i's fascia brings new realism to the term 'carved from solid'. It looks superbly integrated and beautifully assembled from high-grade mouldings."

Of course, BMW have long been praised for their build quality. A reputation they were not about to compromise.

So, despite the trend to build less and less substantial cars, BMW have constructed a more substantial one.

400lbs heavier, the new 5 Series has a body-shell over 40% more rigid than the previous model. Stiffness that is an aid to swiftness, as 'Motor' found.

"The car's immensely strong rigid bodyshell also allows it to sail over large crests and dips with a feeling of great integrity. There's very little excess

body movement: control is simply terrific."

Braking is equally sure.

There are ventilated disc brakes all round. The largest of any car in this class, they operate via a powerful new vacuum servo.

And from the 525i, every member of the new 5 Series has the added benefit of ABS.

SO MUCH FOR THE 'STOP'. NOW ON TO THE 'GO'.

The new 5 Series is powered by what is widely acknowledged as the smoothest range of six cylinder engines in existence.

It begins with a tax efficient two litre. And even this is capable of propelling the car at a somewhat academic 125mph.

Next is a 2.5. It develops maximum torque at just 4,300 rpm. Making the 525i particularly adept at motorway overtaking.

Thirdly, there is a 3 litre that develops an impressive 188 bhp.

And at the top of the range, a 3.5 that will take the car from 0 to 60mph in just 7.7 seconds.

All four are fuel injected. And they each incorporate a computerised engine management system that constantly 're-tunes' the engine for optimum performance.

The car will also calculate its own service intervals. And memorise any engine fault, no matter how fleeting, then report it on its next visit to a BMW service bay.

But it is the engine's performance not its practicality that will attract the keen driver.

It certainly attracted the man from 'Motor'.

"Throttle response is super-crisp and entirely consistent but most impressive is undoubtedly that superlative mechanical smoothness."

Excellent though the individual components of the 5 Series are, it was the car as a whole that impressed 'Motor' most.

"Its real achievement is in the completeness of its abilities, its depth of talent. BMW's standards appear to march forward irrespective of model range or price."

Over the last 4 years BMW invested 4 million man hours in the development of this new 5 Series. And they drove prototype cars and tested components over 2.9 million miles.

(The equivalent of driving around the world one hundred and sixteen times.)

The car that has emerged packs more advanced technology per square inch than any BMW before. Driving it, however, provides some good old-fashioned rewards.

"The 525i is sporty and civilised, fast and economical, well put together and relatively affordable, comfortable and fun to drive."

"This is a sports car dressed as a family saloon, a driving machine which does not sacrifice creature comfort."

These paragraphs represent 'Car's' verdict. BMW now await yours.



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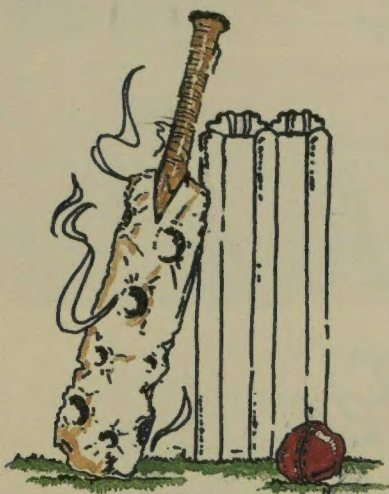
THE NEW 5 SERIES RANGE FROM £15,985 FOR THE 520i TO £24,995 FOR THE 535iSE. PERFORMANCE FIGURE SOURCE: MANUFACTURER. PRICES, CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS, EXCLUDE DELIVERY AND NUMBER PLATES. FOR A NEW 5 SERIES INFORMATION FILE, OR TO ARRANGE A TEST DRIVE, PLEASE WRITE TO: BMW INFORMATION SERVICE, PO BOX 46, HOUNSLOW, MIDDLESEX OR TEL: 01-897 6665. FOR TAX FREE SALES, TEL: 01-629 9277.



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Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

READERS' LETTERS

HICK, HICK, HOORAY



In the June issue of the *ILN* you printed a photograph of the Worcestershire cricketer, Graeme Hick, with the caption "405 not out: Hick slogs the second highest score in English cricket".

As someone privileged to have witnessed Hick's innings in its entirety, I can assure you that Hick did not "slog". His innings was a magnificent display of masterful batting executed with a power and simplicity that was awesome to watch. The memory of this unique occasion will remain with me for ever, as surely no "slogged" innings would.

Miss A. Ridge, Taunton, Somerset

ANIMAL CRACKERS

Congratulations to the writer of your article on zoos, A Dreadful Day Out (*ILN*, June). It is high time the rather dispiriting conditions of our zoos was examined, and I am afraid that Regent's Park Zoological Gardens must now be included in that number.

Is there really a need for caged environments like this when animals are genuinely allowed to go wild in nature-reserves such as Mr John Aspinall runs? In earlier times, when the public had limited acquaintanceship with exotic creatures, zoos were a necessary evil. But innumerable television programmes have now removed that necessity while maintaining our sense of wonder at the splendours of wildlife. They also educate us a good deal better than any zoo seems able to do.

One can only conclude with the writer of your article that the animals are merely the focus of

attempts to make money, and, in effect, a sideshow. Examples of intrusive commercialism formed my main impression of a visit to London Zoo.

It is almost possible to feel sympathy with the Animal Liberation Front, I regret to say.

Mrs Hilda Hodgetts,
Fullbrook, West Midlands

ROT OF GIBRALTAR

In your Editor's Letter, concerning the Gibraltar killings (*ILN*, June) you say "the information provided by Thames Television and the BBC should be examined, however painful it is."

The point is that the information you mention was *not* examined by the programme makers. It was elicited by means of leading questions, and no attempt was made to estimate its degree of accuracy, such as telling us how far away the witnesses were, how long the sounds would have taken to reach them, and what they were doing in those seconds before they heard the sounds they described.

The BBC programme seemed to be intended to produce, not information, but a point of view, whose intention seemed to be covered by the legal phrase about "giving aid and comfort to the Queen's enemies". The witnesses were not cross-examined, nor was their trustworthiness established, while others, whose reports, it seems, did not support the programme-makers' views, were not presented to us.

That is why so many of us felt that the programme was not just a misjudgment, but was mischievous.

David J. Macgregor,
Easingwold, York

DEATH-TRAP CRAZIES

Nick Davies is among the chorus of English writers who are at pains to point out the extremes of American life, wrongly fuelling people's impressions that the country is inhospitable and populated by crazies.

The post office clerk he cited in his Letter from Brandywine Street (*ILN*, June) is a good example of how rude the people and impersonal the place can be; particularly from the viewpoint of the seemingly ever-polite British.

However, the woods "strewn with poison ivy and poison oak," "rocky mountain fever"-inducing tics, and the weather extremes he writes about are relative rarities in a country that spans five time zones and some 40 degrees of latitude. Yes, they do exist, and based on 26 years of life there, including travelling in at least 20 states, I

"tornadoes," "massive falls of snow" and "earthquakes" to get to the beach or the swamp for a swim (in, let's say, Washington, DC?), he would have a tough job finding an alligator or a shark.

It's not the observations in articles like this one that are objectionable, it's the distorted picture people like Davies tend to paint; like the bit about his European friend's theory: "But equally, the whole place is a death-trap which, he says, is bound to induce a certain amount of hideous aggression."

D. Diehl, Isleham, Cambs.

DOG'S LIFE

I was devastated to read the "Lost Dog" snippet (*ILN*, June). I am sure that instead of bringing tears to the eyes many people will be bursting into merriment at the dog's expense.

Would it not have been more humane to phone the RSPCA to try to track down the address of the owners for investigation? If previous owners were the bestial maltreaters of the dog they should be prosecuted.

Either you had your tongue in cheek, or thought it quite in order to print such a sick paragraph. I do not agree.

Marcia Andrews, Chatham, Kent

LOST SHOE SHUFFLE

Readers' Letters (*ILN*, May) has an item you entitled Affair Play, re Candida Crewe's service-testing journey. The "name and address supplied" writer called to mind the following incident.

My late cousin, Mr Ralph Waldo Emerson, owned a guest facility by the seaside in Gloucester, Massachusetts. When a couple who had spent the weekend departed, there was a pair of lady's shoes left behind. Nothing to do but to send them on to the address on the registration with a letter of thanks.

In less than 10 days two detectives arrived with the shoes in question inquiring what the lady who had spent that weekend looked like. Needless to say, future left-behinds were left behind!

The write-up of the Basil Street Hotel also renewed fond memories.

Arthur E. Whitney,
Fort Lauderdale, Florida



would say that the chances of the average person encountering all of them in a lifetime are quite slim.

I must add that when one is ever able to dodge the "launching" rabid squirrels, "wild bears,"

Speed-merchant

London 100 years ago: *ILN*, July 21, 1888

The "Old Times" coach, with its feat of going from London to Brighton and back in less than eight hours, has not only revived the old times, as the phrase goes, for speed, but surpassed them. It seems that anything can be done (with one exception—that of ballooning) in the way of locomotion, and also of athletics, quicker and better than it used to be, if only there is a little money upon it... Fourteen miles an hour is certainly a wonderful rate for a road vehicle to travel for over 100 miles, and the changing of four horses in 42 seconds... is a rapid act.



Next to a lake, in open countryside not far from the city centre of Cambridge and the M11, this Post House was built in the style of a rythe barn.

The panelled restaurant offers views over the lake and chef's herb garden. Waistline watchers can give their conscience a work-out at the indoor pool, sauna or gym.

THE CAMBRIDGE POST HOUSE.



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near Mayfair and Bond Street and is one of the world's most distinguished hotels.

Victoria herself often came to visit; Napoleon III stayed here and Franklin Roosevelt and his bride Eleanor made their home at Brown's during their honeymoon.



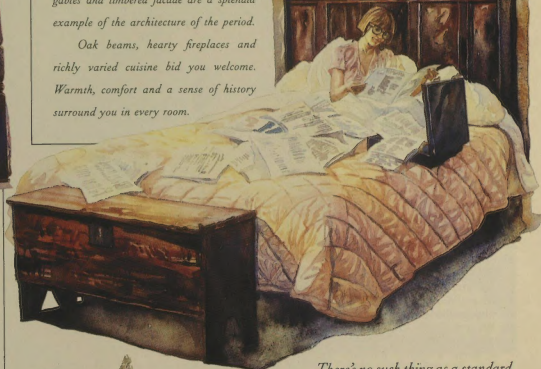
Built in 1838, in the spacious grandeur of the classical Regency style, The Queen's commands a prominent position overlooking Cheltenham's Imperial Gardens and tree-lined promenade.



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REAGAN'S SWAN-SONG

Ronald Reagan, in a Presidential swan-song, held his fourth and final summit with Mikhail Gorbachev and became the third President since the war to visit Moscow. After the successful agreement reducing Intermediate Nuclear Forces last December, Gorbachev had hoped to strike a new deal, reducing strategic nuclear weapons by 50 per cent. President Reagan was too cautious to sign any new agreement, but the summit furthered rapprochement. Since Brezhnev met Nixon, there has been considerable liberalisation in Soviet policy—for example, their withdrawal from Afghanistan and release of 300 dissidents.

Afterwards, Reagan visited Mrs Thatcher and, in an emotional Guildhall speech, effectively bequeathed the leadership of the Western alliance to his closest international colleague.

At home, a trial of football hooligans in Leeds raised doubts about the British system of jury selection, when a panel of young



Rapprochement? Nous? Raisa Gorbachev and Nancy Reagan continue their cold war behind fixed grins.



Modelling a dangerous pout: a Presidential bodyguard.

jurors seemed afraid to return guilty verdicts. Judge Crabtree was forced to reprimand the jury, most of whom were under 21, for confessing themselves intimidated by friends of the accused. In three other court cases, hooligans whose gangs had been infiltrated by the police were acquitted after it was proved that some of the Crown's evidence had been altered. After one such trial, in Knightsbridge, three members of the jury were seen celebrating with eight Chelsea fans who had just been cleared of football violence.

SUNDAY, MAY 8

● Major Ronald Ferguson, the Duchess of York's father, was revealed to be an habitu  of the Wigmore Club, an insalubrious massage parlour.

MONDAY, MAY 9

● Zola Budd, the South African-born British athlete announced her withdrawal from international competition.

● Angry lorry drivers blockaded the ports at Dover and Calais in protest at the 14-week-old P & O ferry strike. On May 11 the National Union of Seamen was fined a further £150,000 for unlawful sympathy strikes. On May 12 the lorry drivers voted to end their blockade and the NUS called off its action. James Sherwood, the Sealink chairman, said he hoped the NUS would win its battle with P & O.

● A widow who died last year left a record £2.75 million to the RSPCA, but gave no instructions for her pet cat's welfare.

● Donald Regan, Ronald Reagan's former Chief of Staff, revealed that the President consulted an astrologer when making major decisions at the White House. Miles Copeland, a former CIA officer, later revealed that a "cosmic operations section" regularly faked astrological charts to influence the leaders of African and Asian nations.

TUESDAY, MAY 10

● Michel Rocard, 57, a moderate Socialist, replaced Jacques Chirac as French Prime Minister.

● The Icelandic government repealed a 73-year ban on beer.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11

● David Steel announced that he would not stand for the leadership

of the new Social and Liberal Democrats. Paddy Ashdown, MP for Yeovil and party education spokesman, became the favourite contender, followed by Alan Beith, MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, and SLD treasury spokesman.

● Kim Philby, the spy who betrayed Britain, died in Moscow aged 76.

THURSDAY, MAY 12

● Kenneth Baker's Education Reform Bill was defeated in the House of Lords over the issues of opting out and the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority. On May 17, following minor concessions by the Government, the Lords voted against a delay in the abolition of the ILEA.

● World Heavyweight Champion Mike Tyson gave away a \$183,500 Bentley to two New York policemen after he had

scraped one of the mudguards.

FRIDAY, MAY 13

● Sir Geoffrey Howe backed Nigel Lawson in his disagreement with the Prime Minister over exchange rate policy. Howe and Lawson want Britain to enter the European monetary system while Mrs Thatcher feels this would prevent sterling from finding the appropriate market rate. On May 17, with the pound at over \$1.89, Mrs Thatcher finally supported Lawson and the interest rates were cut by $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, the lowest level for a decade. On June 2 base rates returned to eight per cent, following a steep decline in the value of the pound. On June 6 they were raised to $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

“For seven and a half years, I worked alongside him and I am proud to be his partner. We have made mistakes, we have had sex. . .”

George Bush on Ronald Reagan in Idaho, May 13. (He meant setbacks).

SATURDAY, MAY 14

● Wimbledon beat League Cup winners Liverpool 1-0 in the FA Cup final at Wembley. A goal by Lawrie Sanchez and some inspired leadership by Wimbledon goalkeeper and captain, Dave Beasant, prevented Liverpool from completing their third successive double.

● Iraqi Mirages bombed Iran's Larak oil terminal, destroying the world's largest ship—the 564,739 tonne *Seawise Giant*—and badly damaging three others.

● America beat Australia in the World Boomerang Throwing Championship in Barooga. France came third.

● President Assad of Syria ordered 7,000 troops and 250 armoured vehicles into southern Beirut in order to end fighting between pro-Iranian Hizbollah fighters and Syrian-backed Amal guerrillas.

SUNDAY, MAY 15

● Soviet troops began their withdrawal from Afghanistan. According to the Geneva agreement, the 115,000-strong force must be out in nine months. Up to 15,000 Russians died in the conflict.



HMS *Superb* (foreground) and HMS *Turbulent*: together at the North Pole for the first time.

● Three men were killed and six were injured when two Loyalist gunmen opened fire in a crowded Belfast bar.

● British aid workers Christopher and Clare Rolfe and their two children were killed in a Khartoum hotel by Lebanese gunmen.

MONDAY, MAY 16

● Sir William Rees-Mogg, antiquarian bookseller and former editor of *The Times*, was appointed chairman of the new Broadcasting Standards Council, a government watchdog which aims to curb unacceptable sex and violence on television. Sir William's favourite viewing includes *'Allo 'Allo*, and he hates *The A-Team*.

TUESDAY, MAY 17

● Boy George, the gender bender pop singer, was invited to perform three concerts in Moscow.

● Anne Diamond, the *TV-am* presenter, agreed to pay her former agent, Paul Vaughan, an undisclosed sum of damages, possibly as much as £350,000—twice her present salary—in an out-of-court settlement. Vaughan had sued her for breach of contract and she had counterclaimed with a demand of £379,658 to compensate for lost earnings.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18

● Eight alleged Chelsea Headhunter hooligans walked free from Knightsbridge Crown Court after the prosecution admitted that

police observation logs had been tampered with. A week earlier 11 alleged members of the West Ham United Inter City Firm were also acquitted. On May 23 charges against five Millwall supporters were dropped by Southwark Crown Court.

● Patrick McVeigh, a suspected IRA bomber, was immediately rearrested on his release from Portlaoise prison, Ireland, so that he could face trial in Britain. He was the first terrorist accused of offences in Britain to face extradition since a dispute with the Irish

government six months ago.

● Plans were announced for a toll-only, “executive lane” beside the M1 to bypass heavy traffic.

“It is not the creation of wealth which is wrong but the love of money for its own sake”

Mrs Thatcher addressing the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, May 21

THURSDAY, MAY 19

● The steamed head of a Maori warrior was withdrawn from sale by Bonham's after protests from New Zealand.

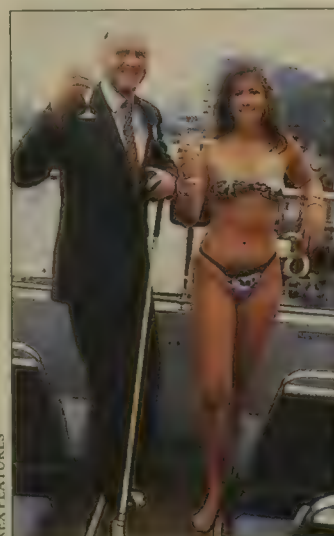
● Unemployment fell below 2.5 million, the lowest level for nearly seven years, while a sharp increase in bank lending and continuing high wage settlements prompted fears of increased inflation.

● England beat the West Indies by six wickets in the one-day Texaco international at Edgbaston.

● Wilberforce, the tabby cat who served at Downing Street for 14 years, died in his sleep.

FRIDAY, MAY 20

● The rate of inflation jumped from 3.5 per cent to 3.9 per cent in April, the highest level since November.



Jaunty Major Ron and friend: before he pushed the boat out too far.

- Ian Botham, the Worcestershire cricketer, announced that he faced an operation to fuse two spinal vertebrae, which could end his cricket career.
 - Neil Kinnock accused Mrs Thatcher of presiding over a "loadsamoney" economy.
 - Terry Dicks, a Conservative backbencher, said in an arts debate that bingo was just as worthy of public subsidy as opera and ballet.
 - Ron Brown, the mace-thriving MP for Edinburgh Leith, was allegedly discovered sharing a shower with a woman in the Commons bathroom.
- SATURDAY, MAY 21**
- Seven women members of the Ethiopian royal family, kept in rat-infested conditions for 14 years, were released.
- SUNDAY, MAY 22**
- The reformist Károlyi Gábor replaced János Kádár as leader of the Hungarian Communist party.
 - The *Seafreight Freeway*, a cross-channel Sealink ferry with 43 passengers and 32 crew aboard, caught fire, killing one man and seriously injuring another.
 - The House of Lords voted against the Tory rebels' poll tax amendment by an overwhelming



Her Majesty's Pleasure: the Queen cheers home the Aga Khan's *Kahyasi* in the £500,000 Epsom Derby.



The cat that didn't get the cream: but the RSPCA got £2.75 million.

- majority of 317 votes to 183.
- Three lesbian demonstrators during the Six O'Clock News and handcuffed themselves to desks and cameras to protest against clause 28 of the Local Government Act. Sue Lawley, the BBC anchorwoman, remained unfurled.
- TUESDAY, MAY 24**
- Neil Kinnock likened Mrs Thatcher to Pontius Pilate and

"I think people have the right to choose their own method of death"

Lord Skelmersdale on the European Commission's plan to ban high tar cigarettes, May 25

- appointed the new chairman of the Press Council, to succeed Sir Zelman Cowan next January.
- WEDNESDAY, MAY 25**
- Lord Young of Grafham, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, decided not to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the controversial £2 billion bid by the Swiss food group Nestlé for the York confectioner, Rowntree.
- FRIDAY, MAY 27**
- Britain's trade deficit increased from £885 million to £1,125 million as higher imports swamped the recovery in exports.
- SUNDAY, MAY 29**
- President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev began their Moscow summit meeting by discussing human rights. Later, Reagan met Jewish refuseniks and other dissidents at the US Ambassador's residence and visited the Russian Orthodox Danilov monastery. In

- spite of the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces treaty, the two leaders admitted, "serious differences remain on important issues". President Reagan withdrew his description of the Soviet Union as "an evil empire" and said he believed Russian people saw a "new way of life" on the horizon. He would not be pressured into signing a treaty on reductions in strategic nuclear weapons, claiming "I'm dead set against deadlines". On June 3 President Reagan visited London and told Mrs Thatcher, "the entire world salutes you and your gallant people and your gallant nation".
- Frank Bough, the homely former presenter of *Breakfast Time*, admitted that vice girls had lured him into cocaine addiction.
 - *Teleton*, a 27-hour Independent Television marathon began, and raised a record £22 million for charity.
- TUESDAY, MAY 31**
- *Tumbledown*, the controversial play by Charles Wood about Falklands veteran, Robert Lawrence, MC, was screened by the BBC with a 12-second cut, after complaints by another officer in the Scots Guards.
- WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1**
- *Kahyasi*, ridden by Ray Cochrane and trained by Luca Cumani,

- won the Derby at Epsom, at 11-1.
- Five Leeds United soccer thugs were found guilty of conspiracy to cause affray after Judge Jonathan Crabtree had told the jury to show guts and refuse to be intimidated.
- THURSDAY, JUNE 2**
- British climber Stephen Venables, 34, announced on Coronation Day that he had conquered Mount Everest by an untried east-face route.
 - 57 miners died after an explosion in a lignite mine in Borken, West Germany.
- SATURDAY, JUNE 4**
- Britain was expected to pay Iran a net £1 million in compensation for damage to the Iranian Embassy in 1980 when the SAS stormed the building to free hostages seized by anti-Iranian terrorists.
 - 200 youths rioted in Crowborough, East Sussex, after police tried to make them leave a wine bar at closing time. Nine police officers were attacked and one of them was pushed through a plate-glass window.
- SUNDAY, JUNE 5**
- 25 prisoners escaped from Haverigg prison, Cumbria, in a mass break-out.
 - Neil Kinnock announced that the Labour Party was no longer committed to unilateral disarmament or old-style nationalisation.

- He claimed, "There is now no need for something-for-nothing unilateralism."
- Dr John Kanis, a consultant, gave £12,000 of his salary in order to keep open a bone disease unit at his Sheffield hospital.
 - Kay Cottee, 34, became the first woman to sail solo non-stop round the world.
 - Sandy Lyle won the Dunhill British Masters title at Woburn, becoming the first player to win a transatlantic Masters double.
- MONDAY, JUNE 6**
- Lester Piggott, the former top jockey serving three years in jail for tax evasion, was stripped of his OBE.
 - **TUESDAY, JUNE 7**
 - An attempt to restore capital punishment was defeated in the House of Commons by a decisive majority of 123.
 - The Government announced plans to sell off Girobank for £200 million.
- WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8**
- Michael Dukakis, Governor of Massachusetts, became the Democratic Party champion after winning the last American election primaries in California, New Jersey, Montana and New



Richard Stokes, the first black guardsman at Buckingham palace

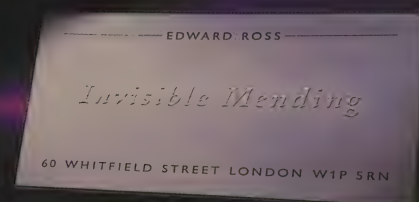
"If jurors acquit people who they believe to be guilty out of fear of reprisals, you are handing this country over to the devil"

Judge Jonathan Crabtree on jury intimidation, June 1

- Mexico. Jesse Jackson, the former contender for the Democratic leadership, said that he deserved consideration as a running mate.
- Russell Harty, the adonoidal Northern writer and broadcaster, famous for his cosy but irreverent interviews, died of hepatitis B and acute liver failure, aged 53.
 - **THURSDAY, JUNE 9**
 - Mike Gatting was stripped of the England cricket captaincy for "damaging cricket's image," after admitting that he had brought a barmaid back to his hotel bedroom for a drink, alone, during the first Test against the West Indies.
 - The Transport and General Workers Union, Britain's biggest trade union, refused to endorse the Kinnock-Hattersley "dream ticket" for the Labour leadership election.



Giant killer: Dave Beasant holds the FA Cup aloft after the Dons' surprise 1-0 victory over Liverpool.



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by H.M. Government
BRONCHITIS AND OTHER CHEST DISEASES
Chief Medical Officers



Keeping a lookout for the latest in clichés

We begin a cliché watch in Serpentine this month. It is designed to deal with new clichés for, while people cannot be dissuaded from using old favourites like "This moment in time", "It never rains but it pours" and "At the end of the day", there is still time to prevent the emergence of new clichés. The problem is that clichés insinuate their way into the language because they have a ring of novelty about them and lend a spurious sense of savvy to the user. Before anyone has time to think about them we are lumbered with over-familiar, dead phrases.

This being an age in which a strong emphasis is placed on marketing know-how and new technology, many of the clichés have come from America. The "ball park figure" infuriates Serpentine because it is so obviously foreign. Few know what a ball park figure is, although they readily use it instead of the simpler "estimate" or "round number". In fact, it is attendance figures at an American football game.

Nearly as irritating is the "goforit" instruction, which means nothing but is intended to convey to the listener a sense of dynamism and decisiveness in the speaker. The perfectly usable phrase "up to date" has been largely replaced by "state of the art", which again makes the speaker sound more knowledgeable than he is. "User friendly" was originally a term employed by the computer industry to express the ease with which a system is used. It now applies to anything from coffee grinders to, rather distastefully, men and women who are good in bed. Another computer term is "log on". This is a verb used to describe the action of gaining access to a large computer system by typing in a code. Instead of the phrase: "I'll contact you", or

"We'll be in touch"; you may hear "I'll log on with you tomorrow".

The expression "major players" has increasing devotees. It obviously originates from American sports commentators, but was popularised by firms on Wall Street who used it to describe the main rivals in any business deal. In Britain it is used by the sort of people who say "goforit".

A bottle of the usual champagne will be the reward for the best new clichés printed next month.

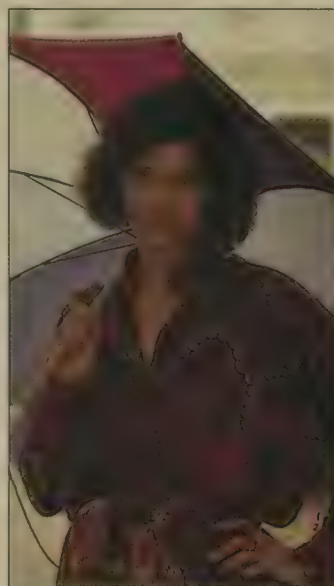
Laying bets on a literary masterpiece

This year's short-list for the Booker Prize will not be announced until September 26, but already the publishing world is in a fever of speculation. Viking, for example, expects great things of Salman Rushdie's first novel for five years, *The Satanic Verses*, a fantastical work whose elements include a hijacked jumbo jet, a movie star who grows a halo, and a mountain climber haunted by a ghost. Cape has three strong nominees: Anita Brookner's *The Latecomers*, Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* and Bruce Chatwin's novella *Utz*. Also to be reckoned with are Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* (on Faber), A. N. Wilson's *Incline Our Hearts* (Hamish Hamilton) and the debut novel by actor Antony Sher, called *The Middlepost*.

However, the most likely winner, according to at least one seasoned observer, is Marina Warner. Her book, *The Lost Father*, will not be published until September 15, but recipients of advance copies are already raving about its evocation of southern Italy in the early 1900s.

The judges of this year's prize, worth £15,000, are the poet Blake Morrison, literary editor Sebastian Faulks, novelist Rose Tremain, the critic Philip French and MP (and

chairman) Michael Foot. BBC2 has succeeded Channel 4 in televising the contest. No one has yet been found to replace Melvyn Bragg, who has previously officiated for the cameras. One must hope, nonetheless, that it will not



Marina Warner, whose new novel is tipped for the Booker Prize

be the hapless Selina Scott, who on one memorable occasion asked a judge, "Tell me, have you read all of the books?"

Cabinet of curiosities

The news that Geoffrey Dickens, the 20-stone Conservative MP for Littleborough and Saddleworth, has been chosen as second favourite to succeed Mrs Thatcher has prompted his colleagues to compose his first Cabinet. It includes members who have been languishing in the backwaters of the party and who are thus generally unknown. The inspiring choice of Dickens, revealed here last month, has awakened interest in these forgotten members.

The only nomination for press officer, a non-Cabinet post, is the

former Tory MP Peter Bruinvels. Mr Bruinvels distinguished himself early in his parliamentary career by offering to be hangman to the nation. Thereafter, he forged close links with the Press by making himself freely available for quotation. If there was a refuse collectors' strike in Dundee or a burst water-main in Esher, Mr Bruinvels put out a statement linking the incident to the decline of the family unit.

Here, then, are people likely to compose the Dickens inner circle: Government Chief Whip: Robin Maxwell-Hyslop, perhaps the last true eccentric in the house; a man with an astonishing knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Pairing Whip: Julian Critchley, a bon vivant who believes that the interests of the nation are best served when MPs are let off parliamentary duties.

Deputy Chief Whip: Ian Lloyd, probably the dullest man in the House of Commons.

PPS to the Prime Minister: Sir Ian Gilmour, the intellectual antithesis, of Dickens.

Leader of the House: John Carlisle, a strident voice in support of South African interests.

Foreign Secretary: John Stokes, a sterling figure from the distant shires whose sentiments are best expressed by the Agincourt speech in *Henry V*.

Vice-Chairman of the party in charge of candidates: Ian Sproat, the former MP who, thinking he could lose his seat because of boundary changes, swapped constituencies and lost anyway.

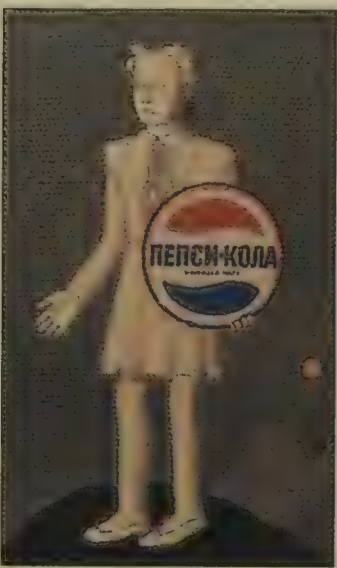
Home Secretary: Mr Nicholas and Mrs Ann Winterton MP.

Secretary for Northern Ireland: Andrew Mitchell, a tiresome individual who members feel would be suited to the rigours of the Northern Ireland office. It would necessitate lengthy periods away from Westminster.

Finally, it is understood that Prime Minister Dickens will follow the wishes of his predecessor in making Rabbi Lionel Blue the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Sotheby's sale could unlock the Soviet vaults

Moscow will scarcely have recovered from the summit by the time Sotheby's arrive for the first international auction of art in the Soviet Union. If anything, the apparition of smooth young men



Grisha Bruskin's *Fundamental Lexicon* (detail): Moscow sale

in double-breasted suits who hold such sales and the representatives of the international chic who attend them will be rather more trying than the summit. Already the Muscovites are acting like seasoned New Yorkers in their attempts to acquire invitations to the Sotheby's party.

Sotheby's, that symbol of capitalism's exploitation of art, have been working for a long time to win permission to hold a sale, and have narrowly beaten Christie's to be the first. This is important. Although the auction of 118 works by 29 contemporary artists is uninspiring in itself and will generate only £50,000 for Sotheby's, it may be the key to an extraordinary wealth of artifacts hoarded in the USSR.

The vaults of museums are crammed from floor to ceiling with paintings and objects collected by the connoisseurs of Russia's imperial past. Roughly 75 per cent of works of art are stored, with only 25 per cent on view. As often as not, the best pieces are never seen by the Russian public and, owing to the lack of museum space, the situation is unlikely to change.

Sotheby's are acutely aware that the Soviets are desperate for foreign currency and that they may consider selling off some of their

surplus treasures. The saleroom's appetite has been sharpened by the increasing difficulty of finding works of art to sell in the West.

The diplomacy required to pull off the coup has been considerable. At first, the two competing organisations were neck and neck, but Sotheby's pulled away from Christie's by utilising the skills of their chairman, Lord Gowrie (known as Graf Gowrie in Moscow), and Baron Thyssen, a member of the board who has arranged reciprocal exhibitions with the USSR in the past. Had Lord Carrington, the new chairman of Christie's, been in place it might have been a different story.

Sotheby's also displayed commendable patience. During the negotiations it installed a Soviet official at a West End hotel in London. He had a quite remarkable taste for English miniatures—not paintings but bottles of spirits and liqueurs. Each night he systematically transferred the entire contents of the hotel mini bar into his suitcases. Sotheby's said nothing and paid the bill.

Bearding the tame Beast of Wolfe's *Bonfire*

It is generally recognised that a wonderful cameo character in Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities* is entirely based on an Englishman, Anthony Haden Guest, who many years ago set himself up as a writer in New York and joined the swarm of social gadflies. Reports of his outrageous and quixotic life soon began to reach the British gossip columns.

The result was that an entire generation find it hard to recall a time when they did not read about his exploits: his impossible conquests, his feats of gate-crashing and his remarkable ability to live like a king on the modest income of a scribe.

He seemed an impossibly glamorous individual, almost too colourful to be true. In fact, many wondered whether he existed at all, and were only a little reassured by the frequent rehearsal of Haden Guest's slender biography: he went to Gordonstoun, his father was a senior diplomat and his mother the proprietor of a night club.

So it was interesting for a member of the Serpentine staff to be introduced to Mr Haden Guest on one of his rare visits to London. It was a shocking experience. The man variously known as "The

Beast" or "Hated Guest" was about as exciting and glamorous as a coypu. He is smallish, neat and resembles the sort of earnest character who emerges on the dot of 5.30pm from the Department of the Environment.

Haden Guest, who is coasting towards his 50th birthday, has very little to say and when he does almost always breaks off in mid-word to look at somebody he thinks he recognises. He did, however, reveal that he is writing a book which will be the definitive account of how the art market destroys art (not a novel idea, surely).

Perhaps this should be the last piece written about Mr Haden Guest.

No empty kettles in the Commons

Mr Charles Irving, the long-serving chairman of the Commons catering sub-committee (kitchen cabinet) has made few political stands in his career (excepting his opposition to the ban of unions from the government's spy headquarters at Cheltenham, his constituency). He has, however, endeared himself to the Members of Parliament by improving the food and drink available at Westminster.

Mr Irving is an intelligent and commercially-minded man, and has realised that, as political debate becomes less and less the point of the House of Commons, MPs are going to have a lot of time on their hands: time which our elected representatives like to dispose of by filling their stomachs.

Mr Irving, therefore, has developed a plan to build a magnificent heated and air-conditioned pavilion on the Thames Terrace, where there now stand some rather bleak and draughty bars. The



Charles Irving stills the rumbling in the corridors of power

pavilion will open next summer, and the best chefs in Britain will be invited to practise their arts at a rate of one a fortnight. Members of all parties believe that "Sir" Charles should be invited to rise along with the soufflés.

In search of the best of London cooking

The *ILN*'s restaurant critic always takes a robust view of the food, wine and service in the city's restaurants. Whatever the reputation of an establishment Mr Amis is happy to prick the self-regard of head waiters and mock the pretensions of French menus.

The *ILN* has decided to follow the example of its critic and expand the annual Restaurant of the Year Award into four categories which



will allow for a much broader judging of quality and service, with a particular emphasis on the latter, for while the variety and standard of cooking has improved in London, the service has not.

We have introduced an award for the worst experience in any London restaurant over the last 12 months and will especially welcome tales of overcharging, rudeness, wine snobbery, foul food and long waits. (Incidentally a bottle of champagne will be awarded to the reader who provides the most damning description of a meal.)

The other three categories are the Best New Restaurant, the Best Restaurant for an Evening Meal and the Best Sunday Lunch.

In the first of these categories the restaurant must have opened in London, after January, 1987. The best evening meal must cost under £50 for two (including service and VAT but not wine) and the best Sunday lunch is open to any establishment whether it be a pub, hotel or brasserie. The awards will be published in the autumn; but in the meantime Serpentine will take pleasure in reproducing your worst experiences. The nomination coupon is printed beside Mr Amis's column on page 63.

Running battle that divided a family

A small and probably unimportant mystery is solved. For decades the Freud brothers, Lucian and Clement, have not been on speaking terms.

Although they have lived in the same city and occupied more or less the same milieu, they have

REN FEATURES



steadfastly refused to have anything to do with each other. Their children have not met and even when the painter, Lucian, was asked by coincidence in a restaurant to share the table of his brother, the former Liberal MP, he left to look for another table elsewhere.

According to Sir Clement's daughter, Emma, the extraordi-

Sir Clement Freud: a childish trick estranged him from Lucian

nary feud dates to an incident in their childhood.

Lucian, the elder of the two, bet Clement that he could beat him in a race to Green Park. He insisted that young Clement should have a start of 50 yards. As Clement set off in characteristically athletic fashion, Lucian shouted to some passers-by: "Stop, thief! He's stolen my money!" Young Clement was apprehended for long enough to allow Lucian to reach the park first.

A dreadful night out THE HIPPODROME

The Hippodrome, Peter Stringfellow's biggest West End nightclub, rarely gets a lukewarm response. Billed by the tabloid press (and the management) as an exclusive and glamorous club, the haunt of pop stars and actors from *EastEnders*, its reputation as London's most famous venue now attracts more tourists than locals. Londoners are, on the whole, less enthusiastic. Against all advice, I set out one Friday evening with a friend, hoping to enjoy the proverbial Good Night Out.

The prominence of the Hippodrome makes it intriguing. It dominates a corner of what is surely now the tackiest location in London: Leicester Square. Radio cabs illegally hustle for custom, saxophonists importune drunken passers-by for money, street vendors loiter, massive cinema advertisements beckon, and everywhere are queues: queues for the Café de Paris, queues for the movies, queues of taxis, and there, on one corner of this charmless, littered expanse, is the biggest queue of all—the crowd of young hopefuls, waiting to be allowed past the Hippodrome's three, threatening, black-clad bouncers.

The queue, the watchful bouncers, the £10 entry fee: all are part of the cultivated image of exclusivity. I had dressed fairly carefully: jacket, plain blue shirt and grey cotton trousers—casual smart. I need not have worried. The vetting system is risible; all they want is your money.

If it was so easy to get in, I would surely encounter unimaginable sartorial horrors. I had visions of suburban secretaries in short skirts, caked-in make-up and cheap perfume, dancing to the "Birdie Song" around their handbags. I imagined being threatened by crop-haired oiks in shiny Lacoste tracksuit tops, with white socks and gold medallions. Those who have not swallowed the "top people's glamour spot" line are invariably convinced that these sorts of people frequent the Hippodrome. They do not. Indeed, everything seemed surprisingly pleasant.

I asked someone why the Hippodrome had such bad press. "How long have you been here?" he asked. I told him half an hour. "Just wait," he insisted, "it gets worse the longer you stay." Andy was young, clean-shaven, good-looking and dressed in a Prince of Wales check suit. He did not belong. Neither did his Gaultier-clad French friend, who would have been more at home posing in the Limelight or the Wag. Like all the trendy people here, they were simply trying to promote their music with the talent scouts who frequent the club. Otherwise, they insisted, only people from out of town and tourists ever ventured here. There was no evidence of celebrities.

A nightclub must have good music, be stylish and fashionable so you can see and be seen, and provide a quiet place to talk. The Hippodrome failed on all of these counts.



DAVE HOGAN

It has an atmosphere of cheap titillation. In the shop, you can buy a video of a bygone Miss Wet T-shirt Competition, while a poster for A Night of a Thousand Hats (to celebrate Ascot Week) illustrates a subtle arrangement with two oranges and a rampant banana. The only hint of something more exotic are the Amazonian transvestite waiters whose white frilly leotards ride, G-string style, between their legs.

Designed in textured black with ubiquitous mirrors, the ambience strives for 1920s Berlin eroticism but never quite makes it. The dance floor has a huge death machine which swoops down, lights flashing,

spewing out smoke on to the bored groovers beneath. Whenever there is a danger of recognising your partner, more fog quickly obscures their visage.

Businessmen and Japanese tourists may leer, beer in hand and mouth agape, from the surrounding galleries, but there is nothing to see. The dim lighting, the smoke, the strobes and the sheer size make for almost total anonymity: the cheap promise of a faceless pick-up for strangers in a lonely city.

Just occasionally, I was seduced into imagining that the club was not so impersonal. In the men's lavatories, the attendant had carefully arranged a shrine to male beauty. On a table before the mirror were laid out nine varieties of aftershave, five types of brush (ranging from the Afro comb to the humble Addis), and assorted gels, sprays, mousses and unguents. A nearby dish was covered in £1 coins—never anything less—and it seemed obligatory to reward the attendant for his trouble. It was the same at the bar. The barman is delighted to serve you your £1.75 half of lager. Cheerfully, he flicks a metal dish into the air and slams it down on the bar with your change. But see his face drop should you not reward him with a healthy tip.

The Hippodrome is unashamedly a temple to conspicuous consumption and needless expenditure. I tried asking for a glass of tap water upstairs and was told I had to buy something first.

I perched on one of the black, leather-style chairs overlooking the dance floor and the DJ's glowing *Blake's Seven* console. A waitress quickly ushered me away; the largely empty area was reserved for champagne drinkers only.

Perhaps crude consumerism is to be expected in any West End nightclub. But this is the whole problem: the Hippodrome, this groovy haunt of the world's stars, is just like any other nightclub, be it in Birmingham, Manchester or London. For all its claims, its clientele is rather ordinary. Its habitués are not even offensively plebeian, as some would believe. The Hippodrome is really just a larger version of your average local palais ●

JAMES DELINGPOLE

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Let me run a list of names in front of you. Gerald Barry, Alison Bauld, Martin Butler, Ross Edwards, Graham Hair, Paul Hart, Jonathan Lloyd, David Matthews, Carl Vine and Trevor Wishart. What have they all got in common? They are the cream of the younger generation of British composers today. At least, I suppose they must be, for they are all having works performed at the Prom season which gets under way this month at the Royal Albert Hall. So why is it that no one has ever heard of any of them?

The youngest composer in the above list (Martin Butler) is 28, the oldest 45. Now, some of you will quibble and say I jolly well should have heard of "a" or "b". Well, if I scratch my head hard maybe I've heard of a couple. On the other hand, I could not name a single piece of music written by any of them, nor could I whistle a single note of it.

So what is wrong? Why has music become a dead art in this country? Why is this the first generation which has failed to produce a single composer under 45 (we will have to wait and see about George Benjamin) with a national, let alone an international, reputation? When you talk to knowledgeable people about this they tend to advance one of three theories:

1 Music really is dead. That is to say, composers have exhausted the possibilities of the available language.

2 The neglect of modern music is merely the result of prejudice on the part of the big London concert promoters. Modern works rarely get performed twice and are almost never recorded, therefore the public never has a chance to get to know them.

3 Composers of today are a bit like Beethoven—ahead of their times. Music has always been a "high" art, with a small but discerning following. Future generations will appreciate what we are missing.

(You also meet people who will tell you that you are a frightful philistine, that contemporary music has never been more widely appreciated and that audiences are fighting each other at the box offices to squeeze into concerts. It is best to smile warmly at these people and edge your way to the nearest door.)

I do not know which of these explanations is nearest the truth. I hate to think it is the first but I have sneaking suspicions that it might be. My problem with most modern music is not that it is particularly unpleasant or discordant: merely that it is completely forgettable. In

& ampersand

Alan Rusbridger
has trouble with
music, encounters
futility and plays
the Good Book
game

scape to the same sort of wasteland that covered France and Belgium 70 odd years ago.

Two things are different. One is that the combatants find it necessary to cajole and bribe countrymen into taking up arms. The families of Iraqis who died during the process of capturing the Faw Peninsular (naturally, Iraq claims that none did) received a Volkswagen Passat from the government. Baghdad, you begin to notice, is full of Volkswagen

at every mention of "orange juice". The phone went dead.

Around a million people have been killed or injured so far, with no significant territorial gains or losses on either side. The war has had little or no effect on the political stability of either government. Neither side appears to have much chance of winning or losing. There is not much glory in it, even less in reporting it. It is one of the more futile wars to have been fought this century.



one ear, out the other. The thing about Bartok, Britten or Tippett—even Stockhausen—is that the first hearing makes enough of an impression for there to be some sort of recognition on the second hearing.

Touring a First World War battle front in the late 20th century is a disorientating experience. Eight hours' flight and a jeep ride from London lies the Faw Peninsular, a 200 square mile piece of desert and marsh adjoining the Persian Gulf. First Iraq owned it, then Iran, now Iraq. Iraq celebrated its repossession recently by flying in Western journalists and offering proud tours of the devastation.

Anyone who has seen the bare Paul Nash paintings of the Western Front in Flanders (currently on show at the Imperial War Museum) would recognise the scene. The guns may be more sophisticated today, the tanks more streamlined, but when all is said and done they reduce a land-

Passats. The Iraqis secured a job lot of them from Brazil. The order for 80,000 cars is said to have been the largest ever placed for a car.

The other thing that marks this war out from previous conflicts is that both sides are extremely proficient at using the world's media as part of their armoury. After each victory, visas are liberally handed out and a flight arrives just in time for the battlefield to have been nicely sanitised of home-team casualties or dubious weaponry. Questions are discouraged, and any journalist painting a less than heroic account of the recent battle will find that the telecommunications became faulty.

(The *Daily Express* man on our trip was particularly enterprising in overcoming such difficulties. He dictated an entire article detailing how Iraq had used gallons of orange juice in the latest offensive. Right at the end of the call—and after he'd fixed his flight home and checked on his mail—he slipped in the advice that they should insert "chemical weapons"

Kinnock and Thatcher—neither of them, so far as one knows, regular churchgoers—have had a bad attack of the religious texts recently. Speech writers have evidently toiled late into the night to see if Our Lord had anything to say on the Poll Tax or development of the Green Belt. It is a simple enough game, as I shall demonstrate. Here beginneth Ampersand's own selection of texts for Mrs Thatcher's Britain:

On education: "I have more understanding than all my teachers." (Psalms 119.99).

On Neil Kinnock: "He multiplieth his words without knowledge." (Job 35.16).

On Sir William Rees-Mogg's job: "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land." (Isaiah 60.18).

On politics: "The wise man's heart inclineth him to the right: the foolish man's heart inclineth him to the left." (Ecclesiastes 10.2).

On the break-up of the centre: "The vile person shall no more be called liberal." (Isaiah 32.5).



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Comfortably seated, you'll notice the new heating and ventilation system. The plush upholstery. The silence.

Over the years we've steadfastly maintained that bigger isn't always better.

Obviously, there are occasional exceptions.

New Passat



WHO THE HELL IS MICHAEL GREEN?

By Jeffrey Ferry

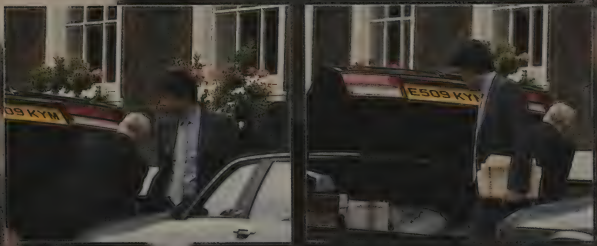
Answer: one of the most powerful men operating in the television industry today, that's who

For a man whose company is worth £600 million, who has youth, a certain amount of charm and even the admiration and support of the Prime Minister, Michael Green is extraordinarily sensitive to criticism. He reserves his special displeasure for anyone who sullies his reputation with the investors who have powered the remarkable growth of his company over the last six years.

Not long ago a City analyst decided to ask one of the investors in Michael Green's Carlton Communications some probing questions. Within 15 minutes Green called and told the analyst that he was totally misinformed. He demanded that the analyst should attend a personal briefing on the qualities of Carlton Communications at the company's headquarters in Shoreditch. The analyst and his assistant duly appeared and were informed that Green was waiting for them on the fifth floor, but that they had to walk up the stairs because the lift was out of order.

They arrived panting, just in time to see the lift, evidently in fine working order, open and discharge the nimble figure of Green, wearing a broad grin. "That's what I do to analysts who talk about selling my stock," he said cheerily. Green arouses distrust, and occasionally dislike, because he is such an unknown quantity. His arrival as a major force in television and the world of finance has been swift, and he does not fit easily into the familiar category of public broadcaster or old-style media baron.

Not only is he unknown but he is also unique, making himself to the television industry what the Saatchis are to advertising. His pleasure and success come not from adopting the conspicuous profile—mixing with the stars at Cannes—but from finance, making deals and competing in the notional world of balance sheets, assets and stock values. He moves as swiftly as Rupert Murdoch and as deftly as the Saatchis, and yet when he tried to buy Thames



CAROLAN GARTIA



CARLOS GUARITA

The north London headquarters of Carlton Communications, which is now a mixture of television and electronics companies

Television, the most profitable independent television company in Britain, everyone asked, "Who the hell is Michael Green?"

Indeed, who is Michael Green? Where did he come from? How did his company grow by 3,600 per cent in just five years and why does he crave privacy?

In bald terms he is 40, chairman and chief executive of Carlton Communications (Britain's largest private television company) and married with two daughters. He came from a prosperous North London Jewish family and has never wanted for material comforts. He was always eager to get into business rather than go to university and left Haberdashers' Aske's at 17 before taking his A levels.

For 15 years Green laboured at building up a quietly successful printing and photographic business called Tangent Industries. In 1972 he married Janet Wolfson, the daughter of one of Britain's richest men, Lord Wolfson, the owner of Great Universal Stores, and gained an entrée into a circle of rich, mostly Jewish, businessmen, sometimes called the St John's Wood Brigade. The Saatchi brothers are an important part of this circle and Charles Saatchi has become a good friend and a big influence on Green's career. He has also met Lord Young, the Trade and Industry Secretary, who is Janet Wolfson's cousin.

The interesting point is that there was absolutely nothing in the first 15 years of Michael Green's career to suggest that he would reach the heights that he has now achieved. But in 1982, when he made his first move into television by buying the St John's Wood editing studio, this all changed. He had foreseen the

growth of the television industry, especially the quantity of work likely to be generated by the growth of videocassettes and the music industry's thirst for promotional pop videos. "I firmly believed then, as I still do, that the television is the most under-utilised piece of equipment in the home," he said. This is a little too glib. What he undoubtedly meant was that the prospect of servicing satellite, cable and ever more conventional channels offers great rewards to businessmen.

In the early 80s Green met Mike Luckwell, who was co-founder and managing director of the Moving Picture Company. Luckwell, a hard-nosed manager, was fascinated by electronics and had built up the Moving Picture

Luckwell possessed a solid technical and business-like knowledge of the television industry, while Green brought to the relationship an astute awareness of finance.

Earlier Green had acquired a stock market listing through a reverse takeover of a publishing company called Fleet Street Letter, which put out stock market tip sheets. In June, 1983, Carlton, Green's new holding company, bought the Moving Picture Company. Luckwell was made group managing director with a 16 per cent shareholding. Green owned 12 per cent but, with his brother's shares, controlled the company. It was, superficially, an odd deal for Luckwell to make, but persuasion is Green's greatest skill.

Green arouses distrust, and occasionally dislike

Company to the biggest producer of television commercials in Europe. "The reason the Moving Picture Company got to be Number One," said an ex-colleague, "is that every time someone brought some new device on to the market, Mike Luckwell bought one, took it apart, figured out how it worked and installed it into his editing suites." For some time Luckwell had been keen to expand and had talked of his plans to Charles Saatchi, his biggest client. Saatchi responded by introducing him to Green. It was clear to both of them that their skills perfectly complemented each other;

The company embarked on an acquisition spree, buying companies which specialized in video duplication, prop hire, standards conversion, and the manufacture of digital effects equipment. Green displayed a remarkable talent for finding companies with the most up-to-date products and the most talented managers. He bought at just the right time, before the sales exploded, and often just when the parent companies were desperate to unload.

It was as if Green was now releasing all the energy and frustration that he had built up during his time at Tangent Industries. His relationship with Luckwell was crucial but so, too, was his admiration for the man who had introduced them, Charles Saatchi. Many of his deals in the next five years would come to resemble the innovative techniques devised by the Saatchis and their takeover strategist Martin Sorrell, another North London boy.

Green understood the two cardinal rules of

finance. The first is that the City loves a winner and the second is that most financial phenomena generate their own momentum. The City was already convinced about the potential growth of television. All they needed was a likely hero to deliver the profits. Green readily assumed the role.

"A lot of people in the television industry have so many exciting ideas, but they forget about the basics of cashflow," he says. Green never forgot. In endless financial briefings, he dazzled analysts and fund managers with his command of detail, rigorous financial controls, avoidance of debt. These acolytes were thrilled by guided tours of his empire in a black Bentley. It scarcely mattered that he knew little about digital electronics, TV's boom industry. The analysts knew less than he did. But when he promised his subsidiaries would deliver rising profits, they did, and still do. He recently announced interim pre-tax profits of £21.2 million, a 59 per cent increase.

Michael took an acquisitions formula invented by Charles Saatchi, and polished it," says one insider. Saatchi had shown him how, with a high share price, acquisitions suddenly become very easy. When you identify a company you want, you can afford to pay more than anyone else, simply by funding your purchases with new share issues. When your shares are that highly rated, the moment you acquire a new company, analysts add its profit potential to your own, and shares jump further. The high share price, supposedly reflecting Carlton's ability to increase earnings, in reality enabled Carlton to increase earnings via acquisitions—in other words, the high rating of Carlton shares became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Carlton is now a mixture of television and electronics companies. Its Stock Exchange performance is spectacular. It is presently on a multiple over earnings of 23—as against an average of nine for all the other television companies on the Stock Exchange, and 11½ for the electronics sector. As they might say in New York, Carlton investors are discounting not just the future, but the hereafter.

Green claims that Carlton is now expanding more through internal growth than acquisitions. It is certainly true that by 1987 the pace of acquisitions was much reduced from the heady days of 1985. It is also true that Abekas Electronics, a California-based digital-effects manufacturer and the real star of Green's group (accounting for some 45 per cent of the group's non-investment profits), is expected to grow by 50 to 60 per cent this year.

What he is less keen to admit is his ingenious use of another Saatchi financial manoeuvre called acquisition accounting, which prevents anyone, least of all outside investors, from knowing whether his divisions are making a genuine profit. The technique is as follows: when he acquires a company, Green writes off enormous portions of the assets of the new subsidiary. By reducing the amount of depreciation that has to be charged in future years, the write-downs have the effect of artificially inflating the profit figures shown in Carlton's accounts, although Green insists he has not had any material benefits from write-offs.

To take one example, TVi is a Soho-based video-editing and satellite-transmission house Carlton acquired in 1985 for £2.5 million cash.

It was then losing money. Carlton's first strategic move there was to cut its prices dramatically in a bid for business. In 1986 Carlton's accountants wrote off no less than £3.385 million-worth of TVi assets, but declared a £341,000 trading profit for the year. Green has admitted to us that the write-off, when entered into the acquisition accounts, in effect boosted TVi's reported profits after 1986, although he denies any material benefits. This is entirely legal, though these manoeuvres are not avail-

He always bought at just the right time

able to TVi's competitors—mostly tiny London facilities houses who operate without the benefits of high-powered accountants.

These write-offs apply to any sort of assets held by a subsidiary company Carlton buys. Carlton has used "expected future bad debts", or even "unanticipated future costs" (unspecified), as reasons for acquisition write-downs. "Goodwill", as accountants call a company's ongoing relationship with customers, is always thoroughly written down whenever Carlton buys something. Application of the much stricter US rules on goodwill accounting knocks a whopping £4.65 million off Carlton's 1987 profits of £33.7 million.

Green conveys invincibility. Analysts or investors who cross him are automatically excluded from his privileged circle. He invites sycophancy. We rang one City analyst and asked if she knew whether TVi or any other Carlton subsidiary was losing money. "He has masses of companies," she trilled, obviously unaware of TVi's public records, "and as far as I know they're all making money." Fifteen



Green belt: the Moving Picture Company's ad

minutes later our editor received a telephone call from Michael Green himself, who repeated verbatim our earlier telephone call to this analyst, muttering something about lawsuits for slander.

But, although you would never know it from the City's encomiums, Carlton has not been without its failures. In 1986 it bought a small company called Skyscan, and announced plans to produce and sell as many as 10,000 home-satellite dishes. After an investment he now estimates at some £2 million, and a marketing campaign which fell flat, Green decided Skyscan was a mistake. He says he has no plans to close down the company. "We still believe there

is a profit to be made in satellite dishes, but we are thinking in thousands now, rather than tens or hundreds of thousands," he says.

According to other sources in the industry, the real story is slightly different: individuals wishing to acquire a warehouse-full of never-been-used satellite dishes, guaranteed to receive Russian, Iranian and other top-quality television entertainment, should write, enclosing a cheque for £600,000, to M. Green, Carlton Communications, N1.

Green prefers to work with the existing management of the companies he buys, but is ruthless in removing them. John Jeffery was the founder of IVC. Carlton's first electronics company, and the source of much of the company's early profits. After the takeover in 1983, Jeffery remained as managing director, with a five per cent stake.

Green wanted the cash from IVC's booming profits to acquire other companies. To take profits out of IVC, though, he had to give Jeffery his five per cent. That share price rapidly rose extravagantly. Jeffery obstinately refused Green's request to sell, even for Carlton shares, until Green finally told him that he could choose between his shares in IVC and his career. Jeffery chose his job and sold his stake. Last year he went to Buckingham Palace to collect a Queen's Award for Export Achievement on behalf of IVC. His reward for this honour was to be removed from the company he had founded. Green assigned him to another Carlton division, which included Carlton's biggest lemon, Skyscan.

"I have been astounded at how petty and vindictive Michael can be," comments one of his former colleagues. Green's reaction: "Sometimes people just don't fit in. It's regrettable, but it does occasionally happen." Jeffery has refused to comment.

Green's personality often leaves those who know him well perplexed. On social occasions he appears diffident, informal and charming in a quiet way. He dislikes parties, even the ones that he gives himself, which are attended by an array of media potentates (Michael Grade, head of Channel 4, the Saatchis, Jeremy Isaacs, the ex-head of Channel 4, and Alan Yentob, the voluble dynamo of BBC television). Five years ago few of these would have suspected Green of the calculation and drive that has exhibited itself, nor indeed of the ruthlessness.

Charles Saatchi has been mentioned frequently in this profile of Green, and with good reason. Green has emulated much in Charles Saatchi's punctilious way of life and business. Like Saatchi, he has maintained a low profile while mixing with the highest in the land (he has met Mrs Thatcher on an informal basis on several occasions); he also keeps a distance between himself and the Press, talking only to a few financial journalists who regard Green as a preternatural genius; he collects Post-Expressionist art and has succumbed to the modern passion for things that are designed well. He is devoted to developing his taste and displays a fastidious interest in clothes. He is as immaculately turned out to go fishing (a new interest) as he is when he meets bankers. In short, his presentation is one of understated and undaring quality.

His friends believe that success has come late enough not to spoil him (though his business victims might disagree) and he is said to confess to having to pinch himself to make sure that it is

he who is discussing the business of television with the Prime Minister.

In the autumn of 1985 Green and Luckwell's acquisitiveness reached a peak. They had long wanted to buy a television company. Now they began secret negotiations with Thorn EMI and British Electric Traction to buy the biggest television company in Britain. It was to be Green's first calamity and says much about the way he operates.

Thorn and BET were keen to divest themselves of Thames, which was then plagued by notorious industrial problems and a disappointing advertising revenue. Green saw enormous potential, both from the broadcasting side and from exploiting its under-used programme library. A confidential deal was

company's structure and its marketing strategy—even its office décor—all after only minimal consultation with Cox, ostensibly still managing director of the subsidiary.

That clinched it for Dunn. He told the IBA that there was no guarantee that the public service values they cherished would not disappear once Green and Luckwell got their hands on Thames. Green advocated efficiency above everything in television production (and, as everyone at the IBA well knew, it took seven men to switch on a light at Thames).

Carlton was in an uproar. Luckwell rang up Cox and accused him of turning Dunn against Carlton. Green, who had never regarded Mike Luckwell as the soul of tact, then accused him of ruining everything. Luckwell, who was already

latest instance.

Anxious to find a compromise, Lord Thomson suggested Green buy 49 per cent of Thames. Thorn and BET would keep a majority stake, but Green would be the largest single shareholder. Green held out for a controlling interest. Persistent to the end, he felt the IBA would have to bow before the simple inevitability of sellers wanting to sell to a buyer who wanted to buy.

Meanwhile, from Thames's Euston Road headquarters, Dunn did everything he could to torpedo the sale. Thames staff were encouraged to circulate petitions against a Green takeover. A merchant bank was enlisted to advise the management on alternative ways of buying out Thorn and BET.

The full IBA was due to meet on October 16. Lord Thomson did not want to wait that long. By October 10 he had consulted every board member and secured majority support for his own view: that, since the IBA favoured wider ownership of TV companies, the proposed Carlton-Thorn-BET deal would narrow, not widen, Thames's ownership. The IBA issued a terse statement blocking the sale of Thames.

"My only doubt—regret is too strong a word—my only doubt is whether perhaps we should not have considered buying 49 per cent of Thames," Green now says; it is his only comment on the affair.

There is something chilling in this reaction. All the other participants in the drama who agreed to speak to us followed the classic British convention: they offered to give their honest, balanced assessment of the affair if assured of confidentiality. Once so assured, they lambasted whomever they saw as the villain of the piece. (Some accepted their own responsibility.) Green talks about the entire débâcle with an almost eerie sang-froid. As far as he is concerned, he made no mistakes.

"Michael is engaging, extremely clever, honest and straightforward," says Christopher Bland, chairman of London Weekend and a good friend of Michael's. Yet these qualities are revealed to only a few people. As a newcomer to the television industry, he could have eased his passage into the charmed circle of ITV broadcasters by adopting a higher public profile: joining the ITV conference and committee circuit, and declaring his commitment to preserving the public service values of Thames Television. Many at Carlton believed that, had he pursued such a strategy earlier he would have persuaded the IBA to overrule Dunn.

His extreme guardedness is rooted partly in a desire for privacy, but springs as well from insecurity. Having left school at 17, he feels at a disadvantage in publicly debating issues of quality and artistic merit on television. Some in the industry assume that Green's public persona as a one-dimensional entrepreneur indicates that he would make down-market programmes. In fact, he is a determined autodidact. His fondest wish is that his two daughters, aged 14 and 11, should have the university education he missed. Among his favourite films are Scorsese's *Raging Bull* and *King of Comedy*—"brilliant films, terribly underrated", he says. The walls of his office are covered with uncompromisingly avant-garde art. His favourite television programmes include upmarket productions like *The Singing Detective* and *Newsnight*.



A recent Green acquisition is Zenith Films, whose successes include *Personal Services*

quickly signed: Carlton would pay £82.5 million for the two conglomerates' 95 per cent holding in Thames.

Early in October, 1985, Thames's managing director, Richard Dunn, was summoned by Thames chairman Hugh Dundas and told of the deal. Dunn was furious. Although he told Green he had no objection to Carlton as a company, Dunn told the *Financial Times* that Thames employees questioned Carlton's "expertise" as a television company. (The *FT* might have added how rich that was, coming from the MD of a company managing to lose money in Britain, despite a monopoly of television advertising time in one of the richest cities in the world.) Dunn went to the IBA, whose approval is required before any ITV company can change owners, telling them that a sale like this would make a mockery of the IBA's process of awarding television franchises.

Tempers rose as the two sides frantically lobbied the IBA. Dunn contacted Michael Cox, a one-time Thames engineer who had recently sold his company, Cox Electronics, to Carlton. Within days of the sale, so Cox told Dunn, Luckwell had arrived at Cox's Feltham headquarters, and set about overhauling the

angry at his exclusion from some of Green's past financial manoeuvres, pointed out that, unlike Green, he had actually produced things, both commercials and films, and understood the IBA and its public service hangups far better than his headstrong partner. Green called in all

He's so
hungry to be
famous
it's pathetic

his chips, and urged his high-powered friends to lobby the IBA in his favour.

From his office above his Knightsbridge headquarters, IBA chairman Lord Thomson pondered the Carlton proposition. He had already gone on record saying Thames should have a wider ownership than Thorn and BET. He appreciated that they should not be forced to stay in Thames. Indeed, both had already provided ample evidence of their ability, or inability, at running a television company—signing a deal behind Dunn's back was only the

"I am 110 per cent committed to public-service broadcasting," he says. "The BBC sets an exceptional standard in terms of good news and current affairs, and a commitment to quality plays and films and, with the coming proliferation of private television stations, we will have to measure up to that standard."

Apart from the humiliation, the Thames affair lost him his group managing director. Luckwell had tired of playing second fiddle and had become angry and disappointed at the failure of the Thames deal. He went so far as to tell Green that they should buy Thames anyway, and thus dare the IBA to revoke their franchise. Green considered that option, but rejected it as too provocative.

Luckwell decided to pursue his own broadcasting ambitions. He arranged for a private sale of his Carlton shares to members of the City fan club for a cool £25 million in cash, signed a non-compete agreement obliging him to keep out of television for two years, and went on holiday. The non-compete agreement ended at the end of March, 1988. Three weeks after that date, Mike Luckwell plunked down £2.5 million for a five per cent stake in TV-am.

"Television is like a drug," Michael Green explains. "People stay in it whether it's good, bad or indifferent. That's what they enjoy."

Even more elusive than his former boss, Mike Luckwell will only say, "Michael Green and I are friendly." Close friends? "No. Friendly."

Green had one final fling with Thames. In June, 1986, Thames was floated in one of those razzmatazz new issues that introduced thousands of punters to the joys of staggering. For once, Michael Green bought unhindered. In fact, he was virtually the only buyer of Thames in the early dealings, acquiring every last share the stags sold. In the end he bought some 2.1 million shares for an average price of £2.20 a share. "I knew Thames profits were going up, and I bought as an investment," he says. In 1987 he sold out for a tidy profit of £3 million.

But he was more determined than ever to become a broadcaster. His next move, in the middle of 1986, was an attempt to take over London Weekend Television. Green went to see LWT chairman Christopher Bland, an old friend from his days in the printing industry. Bland told Michael that he and his management would welcome him as a major shareholder, but warned that the IBA would permit him only 20 per cent of LWT. In fact, Michael already owned 850,000 shares of LWT—nearly five per cent of equity—which he had purchased in 1985, when he believed the company was undervalued.

Bland went off to the IBA where he was told that Green would be allowed to buy only 10 per cent of LWT. Apparently, the IBA felt that 20 per cent in a company with wide ownership like LWT was too much. Green duly sold his LWT shares for a £1 million profit and, undaunted, proceeded to lead a consortium bidding in the IBA's satellite broadcasting sweepstakes. This included companies belonging to his friends Charles Saatchi and Christopher Bland, as well as Dixon's, the electronics retailer, Columbia Films, and a couple of merchant banks. Again he was thwarted by the IBA, which plumped for the consortium headed by two of his most prominent rivals, Granada and Virgin.

His dogged persistence eventually paid off in

March, 1987. He became a broadcaster at last, having bought 20 per cent of Central Independent Television for £29 million. Twenty per cent, however, is a long way from control, or even significant influence in a company which has two other big shareholders (Robert Maxwell and publishers D. C. Thomson). So his

Green's ambitions continue unabated

ambitions continue unabated. A fifth channel, a sixth channel, a privatised Channel 4—they all interest him. There is scarcely a piece of junk floating in space, or scheduled any time this century, but that Green has a consortium bidding to bounce television programmes off it.

Many in the television industry do not understand why this highly rational businessman is so desperate to be in broadcasting, an industry of uncertain, and often distant, profit. One television executive, who dislikes Green, says he is driven by a desire for fame and glory. "Go and look at his house," he suggests. "It's full of busts of Roman emperors. He's so hungry to be famous it's pathetic." When *The Sunday Times* listed him as one of its "Faces of the Nineties" last year, Green photocopied the article and distributed it to the staff at Carlton's head office with a note attached reading "You may not have seen this".

He denies seeking glory. "Our motivation is

Charles Saatchi, Green's pleasure comes not from public recognition but from the knowledge that he has built the biggest and best company in his chosen field. The Michael Green acquisition strategy is like the Jane Fonda workout applied to high finance. "Be All You Can Be!" is its motto.

He nonetheless understands that political appointments can help his business interests, and that public service is important. In 1986 he accepted an offer from Lord Young to be chairman of the Open College of the Air. But his 1960s-style scepticism of such honours is quite apparent. "Some honour," he says drily. "Lord Young wishes he could find more people willing to take unpaid jobs like that!" He has done the Open College job competently, but with nothing like the same dedication he brings to Carlton.

Green has now added film-making to his empire. Last October he bought Zenith Films, a top-quality film and television company responsible for such critically-acclaimed movies as *Wish You Were Here* and John Huston's *The Dead*. Two more of his films, *Patty* (the story of kidnapped heiress Patty Hearst) and *Stormy Monday*, starring Sting, were premiered at Cannes. Typically, Green himself did not attend the festival.

He has bought a Wiltshire millhouse, to go with his Mayfair residence, where he is learning to fish. It is not far from the country house of David Puttnam, yet another North London boy made good in the media. But Puttnam fell from grace—the not unexpected result, some say, of his own arrogance. Green is not expected to fall; provided the broadcasting revolution happens. ITV's declining share of the audience



Patty, with Natasha Richardson was premiered at Cannes. Typically, Green did not attend

to do more of what we're good at," he says, characteristically bland. He is surely not a true member of the political establishment. Traditionally, a businessman's proudest achievement is recognition from that establishment. Knighthoods, peerages, positions on worthy committees, all are seen as validating capitalist success. Michael Green is, if anything, a yuppie, and yuppiedom, habitually misunderstood by the Press as simple materialism, is in fact something subtler: the application of the 1960s goal of personal excellence to business. Like

over the last three years has made the City highly sceptical of broadcasters in general, but Green is notably exempt from its strictures.

The future of British television may not rest entirely in his hands, but he, more than any other individual, will be the instrument of its change. It is a heavy burden. One fears there will be little time for fishing practice in the battles that lie ahead ●

Jeffrey Ferry is an American writer on business and media affairs.



You've got to hit the brakes.

You're looking at one of those freak situations.

A wet evening, a down hill corner, a car with a puncture, a man in the road, an on-coming vehicle . . .

None would be a problem by itself. But, all together, they'd test the skill of

even the safest driver.

If you brake too hard, you could lock the wheels and skid into the man. But if you don't brake hard enough, you could run into the back of the stationary car.

Such a situation may only arise once in a hundred thousand miles. But if it

ever does, you'll bless the day you bought a Ford Granada. Because anti-lock brakes are standard equipment on every Granada in the range.

Faced with circumstances like these, the system is designed to stop the wheels from locking so, provided you're going

But can you miss the man?

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LONDON'S ESTATE AGENTS: THE UNSEEMLY SCRAMBLE FOR YOUR HOME

That ultimate middle man, the estate agent, has grown fat with the property boom. As the capital's house prices rise by 25 per cent a year, so does his percentage. Carrie Segrave investigates this reviled profession and its sharp practices

The young man sits in a car in a suburban street reading a newspaper. Periodically he discreetly lifts his gaze to watch the door of a shop front. Another young man wearing a business suit and carrying a portable telephone and some papers emerges from the door, climbs into his own car and drives off. He is followed to a street where he parks and walks to a house. The first young man makes a note of the street and house number and drives away.

He is not a spy, nor private detective but rather an estate agent trying to poach a rival agency's clients. As soon as the coast is clear, he or an associate will return to the house to find out if the owner is considering a sale. He will promise a larger sale price than the first estate agent and then mention that he has a client on his books, a cash buyer, who is able to complete in a matter of days.

The estate agent, once a genial soul who was happy to make a modest percentage from a quiet market, has changed. As house prices rise by 25 per cent a year (the current average rate in the south-east of England), so the earnings of estate agents rise by 25 per cent.

The pickings for this, the ultimate profession of middle men, are now very large indeed. In all areas of the city prices have risen. In Pimlico, for instance, the cost of an average home has risen from £100,000 in 1983 to £215,000 in 1987, in Hampstead it has risen from £120,000 to £285,000 in the same period and in Clapham from £39,000 to £130,000.

The real competition is at the top of the market in central London where newly rich

buyers do not flinch when prices of over £500,000 are mentioned. The most staggering rises have been recorded in Regent's Park where The Holme, a mansion built in 1818, was sold in 1984 for £5 million. A little under four years later the same house is on the market for £30 million. With a lease of just 60 years the owner will be paying about £10,000 a week for the privilege of living in Regent's Park.

The visible proof of the animated property market is the number of new agencies which have opened all over London. In one street a straight run of nine has been recorded while it is not uncommon to find six or seven agencies within half a mile of each other.

The public is probably dimly aware of this growth but what it almost certainly does not understand is the intense competition it represents. Behind the scenes war is being waged as the agency world fragments into four types: the traditional firms, the big new conglomerates, the quick-buck sharks and the rank amateurs. Between them is an immense range of quality and honesty; while the good can be very, very good, the bad can be disastrous.

The most obvious change came when the banks and building societies suddenly began a race to create the biggest chain of agencies by buying up small businesses. They were galvanised by competition in their own sphere just as much as by the property boom. With the estate agents came a large number of high-street shop fronts through which these big institutions could promote their mortgages and insurance policies. This burst of activity drew attention to the profession and everyone from out-of-town

opportunists to indigenous cowboys saw the potential.

In the scramble by the Prudential, General Accident and Lloyds Bank to buy prime estate agencies, sums of up to half a million pounds per office were paid. Partners and shareholders in these suddenly coveted firms walked away with very large cheques. An important part of this process was the frustration felt among what is picturesquely known as the "marzipan layer" of senior managers who were working towards a stake in their firms. They saw prospects of partnerships vanish overnight as they became employees of giant corporations. They either left immediately or stayed to collect the one year's loyalty bonus, and then left.

Chesterton's, pillar of Kensington and the surrounding area, is one familiar name that has vanished. It was swallowed up by the Prudential a matter of months after converting itself from partnership to a limited company. For a time the names of Chesterton's and the Prudential co-existed but now the Pru has obliterated Colonel Chesterton's memory, in favour of Prudential Property Services.

The resulting wave of staff mobility has contributed to the huge number of new and unfamiliar names now adorning the For Sale signs around the city. Some of these new businesses hope to grow into the household names of tomorrow but others are more cynical. A group of three or four offices may prove attractive to one of the big chains and so become the target of a lucrative takeover. The



extreme form of this behaviour is for an entrepreneur to set up an agency in a prime site in order to hold a site-hungry chain to ransom. In these cases the business of selling a house comes low on the list of priorities.

On any street in London there now exists a quite remarkable array of agents. There may still be an old-established agent whose knowledge of their patch rivals anyone's. Next door will be a branch of a big firm with highly professional standards. This may be run by the old management but, equally, new staff with local knowledge may have been taken on. Across the road there is a firm with minimal experience of the London market. At some distance from these is probably a shop front that conceals two or three totally charming but also totally ruthless cowboys.

Of course, not all estate agents conform to the new stereotypes. The people who look like cowboys may in fact provide the most efficient and honest service in the area. Equally, the big-chain agency may employ a stable of daft and incompetent débutantes.

What is clear, though, is the extraordinary level of competition. Outside London there are reports of rival estate agents brawling and then being forced to explain themselves to the courts. In London there have been court cases involving agents who have posed as buyers and extracted flat-lists from rival firms.

A premium is put on the free advertising space of For Sale boards. Frequently new agents erect boards where they have no property to sell. This is the most easily achieved on blocks of flats, where each inhabitant will assume that one of the other flats is for sale. I spotted boards which offered "luxury two- and three-bedroom apartments" in a block that consisted entirely of studio and one-bedroom flats. Another trick is for estate agents to place their boards strategically on the approach roads to an area where there is a large amount of buying and selling.

Infuriating as these games are for other agents, they do not directly affect the customer. But there are other tricks which do. A seller may find himself rung up by an agent who has seen his house on the market with a competitor. He is told: "We think your place is grossly undervalued . . . in fact we have a buyer who would pay you well over the price. Of course, we don't like to do this to a colleague, but we thought you would like to know."

"I duly changed agents," said one victim, "and then, of course, the promised buyer failed to materialise. Eventually the place did sell at more or less the price quoted by the original agent. The change cost me three months of waiting while the second agent went through this elaborate fiction."

Over-valuing is by no means uncommon among agents wishing to acquire good properties on their books and keep them off their rivals'. It is incidentally well worth demanding the reasons behind a valuation. Another trick is for an agent to undervalue a property (usually one ripe for refurbishment or development) in order to buy the place cheaply himself and then to reap the profits. This sort of transaction was made illegal by the 1979 Estate Agents Act but it may be undetectable if an intermediary is used.

Tricks of the trade

1 Vendors should always ask for a sole agency, not a sole *selling* agency.

Estate agents sometimes insist upon having sole selling agency which means that even if the vendor sells privately he or she must pay the agent's commission.

2 Vendors are frequently seduced by wildly over-optimistic valuations. This is a device used by agents to acquire sole agency. Once the client is on their books the asking price is dropped.

3 Estate agents often have informal links with developers and there have been instances of agents encouraging a sale below market value in order to smooth the way of the developer. The usual line is "Terrible condition—worth £50,000 less than you think, but we might just have a buyer."

4 To increase their advertising, agents may plaster an area with For Sale signs, even though they do not have the property on their books.

5 Agents are not averse to poaching desirable property from competitors simply by ringing the seller and promising to deliver a buyer who will pay more. The buyer frequently does not exist.

6 Agents can be remarkably cavalier with other people's property. It is essential that all buyers are escorted round the house if the owner is not there. Even this does not guarantee the property will be respected. There are stories of estate agents having amorous adventures in the seller's bedroom. On one famous occasion an agent gave a potential buyer the keys to a flat before completion. By the time the owner returned from holiday the master bedroom had been divided into two.

7 Excessive promotional costs (brochures and newspaper advertising) may be incurred by the vendor if he or she does not insist that this is taken care of by the agent. Vendors need only consider that advertising and promotion are the prime services supplied by estate agents and thus these costs should be included in their percentage.

P.S. A vendor is of course able to remove the property from an agent's books at any time. But one should assume that all agents will behave honourably, anyway.

Fraud and deceit that hurt clients are supposed to be things of the past due to this Act. But the Government has left several crucial clauses on the shelf—failed to implement them. In part, this seems to be due to distaste at getting their fingers soiled on a Labour government measure—it was about the last Act the Callaghan government passed. And in part, too, it comes down to the ideology: to restrict the estate agency world by insisting on qualifications for agents would curb free competition.

One Tory MP, John Heddle, has been campaigning without success for action on Clause 22: the one that says agents must meet standards of competence. The minister responsible, John Butcher, responded to John Heddle's latest question by saying that the Director General of Fair Trading hoped the estate agents themselves would set up some kind of self-regulatory mechanism.

Mr Heddle, who was himself an estate agent until he became an MP, agrees that the changes of recent years have been "dramatic". Although some agencies give training, this generally covers only sales techniques.

"No one foresaw the dramatic revolution in estate agents' practices—with a capital and a small 'p'. The practices the public complain of are brought about by a definite decline in professional standards, which is due to increased pressure-salesmanship. And increased pressure-salesmanship comes from financial services groups continually wanting to improve on last year's, or last month's, or last week's sales figures. And the devil take the hindmost.

"At the moment financial institutions are employing real-estate yuppies, who know very little about construction, design, architecture or valuation—only how to smooth-talk the applicant round a property and fill in a mortgage application form.

"My main concern about the Estate Agents Act is that even someone convicted of fraud can, having served his sentence, come straight out of jail and start up again the next day."

Mr Heddle would like to see a minimum standard of competence, and has held talks on this with the large financial institutions and the estate agents' professional bodies.

"I want to see agents having to obtain a practising certificate from the Department of Trade and Industry. I want to see the professional bodies set up a practising council—a sort of CBI of the estate agency profession which would organise a qualification scheme. This would meet the government's criterion of self-regulation: in other words, I'm not expecting a government exam, a GCSE in estate agency. But rather that the major financial institutions involved in retail estate agency, and the major professional bodies, devise a qualifying exam, success in which produces a practice certificate so that they become licensed real estate brokers, as in the USA.

"Anyone unlicensed would have no professional indemnity or insurance cover. Without these, they would not get their Department of Trade and Industry certificate and would be debarred from practising. In other words, this would be self-regulation backed up by a government seal of approval."

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE SOLD A PROPERTY...

We put a house in central London on the market to see what sort of service six well-known estate agents provide for both buyer and seller. Our experiment revealed everything from professionalism to incompetence



DODD MILLER

A SUBSTANTIAL FIVE BEDROOM FINE PERIOD FAMILY HOME IN THIS POPULAR LOCATION ENJOYING THE USE OF COMMUNAL GARDENS.

Our five-bedroom, four-storey house is in one of the richer purlieus of Ladbroke Grove: an area of uniform stucco, pillared porches and desirable communal gardens. In W11, £1 million homes co-exist with council blocks and housing trusts. We calculated that our house, with a rateable value of £905 per annum, was worth at least £400,000. Events were to show that this figure was remarkably conservative.

Our vendors telephoned the agents and instructed each of them that the sale was to be conducted discreetly, without sign-boards or glossy brochures, but made no explanation. Anscombe & Ringland, the first to inspect the property, duly arrived in the shape of two young men whom the lady of the house thought "rather brutal-looking" products of the minor public schools. Part of the Hogg Robinson property group, Anscombe & Ringland

declares itself in intense leafletting campaigns to be "London's most successful and fastest-growing estate agency", and has a brash and pushy image its two representatives amply personified. Yet they were not terribly efficient. They completely failed to notice a downstairs bathroom, and their measurement of the drawing-room was out by four feet.

The personality of each agency quickly emerged. Barnard Marcus sent a pleasant,

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Flying London to Singapore there are two ways of being woken up. All but one airline use the 'landing for more fuel, halfway there in the middle of the night' technique. Only



The property is a particularly fine example, and features include a beautifully well proportioned reception room with charming views across a rear garden to the communal gardens beyond.

"very professional" girl and her assistant, who diligently looked in all the cupboards. The Prudential and Foxtons were also businesslike, although our vendor felt that the Pru were a little too brisk and less grateful for a retainer than an agent should be. The antidote was the up-market rep for Knight Frank & Rutley, an apple-cheeked Sloane who perfectly understood the necessity for a quiet sale—"on a whisper basis, of course," she murmured—and who said she could easily "place" us by ringing favoured clients. These reassurances, however, were soon accompanied by formidable legal-looking documents, which required the lady vendor's signed agreement that she would pay for any advertising (cost: £250) should instructions be withdrawn while the agency was still selling. Since we had already settled on no publicity, this development was puzzling.

Right from the start, Faron Sutaria looked the likely leading player in the drama. They scored immediate Brownie points when Mr Sutaria arrived in person with a demonstration of all the persuasive arts at his disposal. He "unleashed a torrent of words" in conveying why Faron Sutaria was the only company to sell the house. Our vendor was tickled pink, in spite of herself. "Honey just poured out of him." He was undeniably exotic, "perhaps Levantine", and a great contrast to his middle-class colleagues in the profession.

None of the agents was told who their competitors were. A tremendous jockeying for sole agency began, nonetheless. Half and quarter percentages were flourished as blandishments, the most attractive being the 2 per cent charge of

Barnard Marcus. But, for our survey to work, we required multiple agency, and so every agent reluctantly agreed upon the usual 3 per cent. As tens of thousands were freely added to the house-price, literally by the hour, this 3 per cent grew in significance.

For it soon became clear that no two estate agents were talking the same price. Barnard Marcus valued it between £615,000 and £620,000, but thought it should go on sale for £630,000. Knight Frank & Rutley fluctuated between £550,000 and £650,000, but if it was on the open market, £625,000; on their much-vaunted "whisper basis", £650,000. The Prudential said they were "going off to have a natter", and then came back with £600,000. Anscombe & Ringland suggested a top price of £675,000.

A surprising gulf, however, yawned between the valuations of Foxtons (£695,000) and Faron Sutaria (£585,000): £110,000, to be precise. How could there be this incredible disparity? Mr Sutaria had revealed an unexpected streak of caution. So we telephoned his office and expressed astonishment at such a low figure. There was a momentary stunned silence. Seven minutes later Mr S. himself was on the line. He sounded appalled. Who, exactly, had quoted this higher figure? Would it, by any chance, be an agent whose name began with F?

We started to get the picture. Estate agents, far from colluding with each other, as we had suspected, at the expense of buyer and seller,

actually nursed terrific mutual enmities. This hostility was also very particular. Nice Miss Parker at Knight Frank & Rutley became markedly frosty at the mention of Anscombe & Ringland and Faron Sutaria; if they were, indeed, competitors, she would be most reluctant to handle our property. "These are the two agents we hate dealing with," she said tartly, but did not elaborate.

Having decided that £640,000 would be our asking-price, we sat back to await offers from prospective buyers. The *ILN*'s would-be purchasers, with identities ranging from author to video producer, had been busily inquiring about family houses in W11. Dizzily high incomes and bank balances were quoted in support, although Anscombe & Ringland were the only agent who at any time queried our ability to pay. Indeed, the *ILN*'s Miss Candida Crewe, eventually irritated by Faron Sutaria's boredom with her inquiry, grandly volunteered that she was worth £750,000 and jolly well expected to be treated as such. It still took three days before the agency rang back to tell her she could go and see our house.

The most puzzling case was Foxtons'. Although we knew from the vendor that Foxtons had proposed selling the house for £695,000, the man who answered their telephone denied any knowledge of the property and a follow-up call produced the same strange response. Perhaps the idea of sharing the sale deterred them. Evidently, however, the enthusiasm displayed to the vendor did not always extend to the buyer.

With Foxtons missing, presumed dead, the



A view of the spacious and well-lit sitting room

race was on between the remaining five agents, each of whom was relaying glowing reports of progress to the vendor. "I think he's genuine," Barnard Marcus eagerly confided of their particular buyer, a car-dealer in a Katharine Hamnett suit. The man from the Pru, a grey-haired ringer for Robert Kilroy-Silk, was especially smug. He had a "gentleman in Ealing" (the video producer) just waiting in the wings for this house. "He has blown hot and cold, but I now think I've got him in the bag," he confidently informed our lady vendor, indicating that this client had been on the books for weeks and months rather than days. Meanwhile, in a similar display of intimacy, he was telling the "gentleman in Ealing" that the house did need "a little TLC".

He meant Tender Loving Care.

"You know, the carpets *are* showing signs of wear and tear, and the paint-work isn't pristine. It's a bit shabby here and there, but"—a soothing change of tone—"it is a very charming family house."

On Tuesday, six days after the seller first rang the estate agents, buyers began visiting the house, which, it is true, had received no extra TLC—no smell of percolating coffee, or cinnamon for baking cakes: those *Good Housekeeping* tips designed to impress buyers. Each *ILN* member was shown around by an agency representative, but efficiency varied. Anscombe & Ringland were first again, but their limited grasp of detail left our buyer uncertain whether heating was by gas or electricity, if there was any burglar alarm, and who, at what cost, was responsible for maintaining the communal gardens.

The Prudential were very polished and competent: their man was the only agent to arrive with printed details of the property. He remembered which was the baby's room, and tiptoed gently inside. He expatiated on the leafy delights of the communal gardens ("so much safer for your children"). And he was very informative about the state of the house-market in Notting Hill, slowly reviving from the effects of the October crash. "It's only now becoming stable again, so it's an excellent time to buy."

The man from the Pru was doing fine until, quizzed on local parking facilities, he denied this was a clamping area. His attention was promptly drawn to a clamped car only 100 yards away. He also betrayed a rather enigmatic smile in response to our fear of gazumping. "Don't worry," he reassured. "I can tell these people (the owners) are very English, very honourable people." Little did he know what we already knew: that a genuine buyer, a well-known actress and TV personality, had just met the asking-price—indeed, had quickly upped her offer from £620,000. We had hooked a live one. Or vice-versa.

The plot began to thicken in other ways. The discretion demanded by the people selling the house had obviously stimulated the imagination of some agents. After conducting her tour of the property, the Barnard Marcus girl took our man to one side and explained that she thought the couple's marriage was breaking up.

That was the reason for the secrecy, the lack of publicity, in case friends found out.

"They've lost all interest in the house, actually," Miss Deep Throat bluntly declared.

"They could have got more for it. The way this market is, there's such a demand for houses now."

She then took a big breath and admitted that someone else—introduced by Foxtons, she believed—had just offered the £640,000.

Our man looked suitably crestfallen. So it was all over, then?

"Oh, no. I don't think these other people can go up much more than 640. I heard that on the grapevine. If you really want the house, I'd go for 650 and see if that'll clinch it. With a little bit of work, you could easily turn it, if you were to re-sell it, into something worth 725."

This was certainly amazing, and all the agents, bar the Prudential, which was either a model of integrity or slow on the uptake, were now happy to enter their clients in a contract race. Like Barnard Marcus, Knight Frank & Rutley proposed an offer of £650,000, while

Anscombe & Ringland were "desperate", our vendor reported, to outbid competitors. "Their applicant, they said, had a lot of money, and so a contract race would be in my best interests. They said it happens quite often, and no one gets hurt. If you accept an offer but somebody else wants your property, the first person will always go off and find another house."

We had decided to call a halt, however. Now that we had reached the asking-price, it was opportune to remove the house from the market. The vendor abruptly informed everyone that her husband had suddenly become unwilling to sell. Barnard Marcus were left to speculate how the mysterious marital problems had been overcome.

Such a bombshell would have killed the ambitions of most agents, but not Faron Sutaria. This was the company which had introduced the actress; yet now it had no compunction about urging our Miss Crewe to continue bidding. Her initial offer of £650,000 was reported and turned down. Faron Sutaria said the owners did, indeed, appear immovable.

"I think, unless you offer substantially more. . ." Their Mr Finch sighed in infinite regret.

Another ten grand—£660,000?

"I should say another £20,000 or £30,000."

Oh, all right.

"Actually," Mr Finch began, "you'd be safer to offer nearer £700,000, to be honest. Blast them with an offer they're going to find it very hard to refuse. Then they might bite. I know it's a lot over the asking price, but if it's a situation where you love the property, and the vendors are having doubts about selling. . ."

But it would only be worth that in a year's time, Miss Crewe protested. "Yes, but you would've got the house you want," Mr Finch insisted. So seven hundred grand it was—and much good it did anyone.

Both Barnard Marcus and the Prudential subsequently told their clients that the actress, who had lost the house was also on their books, and were injudicious enough to describe her as unreliable.

"She once went and knocked on someone's door without telling us," the Pru disclosed, "so she wasn't told about this house by us."

He blamed Savills, but Savills had never once been involved. It was yet another instance of estate agents getting it wrong. He was right in one particular, though: "I did say it was an unusual sale."

We asked the vendor which of the six estate agents had fared best. She said that Faron Sutaria had certainly tried the hardest. It had once brought round a whole group of potential buyers. But were not their rewards disproportionate to their efforts, we wondered? The "sale" had taken no longer than a week. Had it been bona fide, and the £640,000, a not unreasonable figure, been accepted, then for their 3 per cent multiple agency fee Faron Sutaria would have pocketed £19,200. Not bad recompense for, in this case, a few phone calls and introductions.

H. G. Wells, no less, wrote in *Kipps*, his story of a humble draper's boy overwhelmed by wealth, that "all other callings have a certain amount of give and take; the house-agent simply takes."

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How each estate agent performed

ESTATE AGENT	ESTIMATED SALE PRICE	SOLE AGENCY FEE	VENDOR'S REPORT	BUYER'S REPORT	OVERALL PERFORMANCE
Foxtons	£695,000	2½%	Efficient and knowledgeable about the market. "Took full notes"	Off-hand, and denied all knowledge of the property. "It is difficult to divine quite what they were playing at"	Were very keen to acquire sole agency. Once sole agency was lost, interest seemed to diminish
Barnard Marcus	£630,000	2%	Pleasant and very professional	Pleasant and very professional	Free with information about the vendor. Otherwise, provided a reasonable service with a competitive sole agency fee
Prudential	£600,000	2½%	Capable but rather too brusque	Polished and competent	Took a balanced view in valuing the property. Behaved creditably
Anscombe & Ringland	£660,000—£675,000	2½%	Flashy and rather casual	Seemed to lack detailed knowledge	Pushy (with all its advantages and disadvantages)
Knight Frank & Rutley	£625,000—£650,000	2½%	Dauntingly efficient. "She got the point immediately that I did not want any publicity"	Courteous but impersonal	Their manner seemed to mitigate their salesmanship
Faron Sutaria	£585,000	2¼%	Very flash. "Honey poured from him". Expended most effort	Keen to encourage bidding	The most uneven performance. They undervalued the house by £55,000 which would have meant a serious loss to the owner if she had taken only their estimate. However, the agency made good their lapse by introducing the most potential buyers

The agents reply

Foxtons: They said that, in quoting the highest evaluation of £695,000, they had calculated that having access to communal gardens was worth at least £60,000 in itself: "The communal gardens have pushed up prices so much in that area that there is a disparity. While I think that 695 was our top—maybe top-heavy—price, we certainly felt at the time that anything around the 650 mark was very, very realistic. I know it sounds crazy but people will offer that for communal gardens, and it seems silly for her (the vendor) not to try to get the better price."

Why did they not introduce clients? "We haven't actually been instructed on the property. I'm sure there is only one agent. I don't know who the agent is, but we didn't get instructed."

Barnard Marcus: They emphasised the importance of access to the communal gardens in their evaluation: "It is the most important factor. All the lovely houses backing onto the communal gardens there—everybody wants them. If they've got children, they can just leave them in there and no one can get in to them, so it's like being in the country."

They denied they had ever encouraged gazumping, while arguing their client had bid more than £640,000, the asking-price: "Gazumping means she (the vendor)

had accepted another offer, and she didn't accept another."

Prudential: They said they had never received "formal instruction", nor were they given an official asking-price of £640,000: "not that we knew of, anyway."

But for how much could the house have sold? "£750,000. We didn't have a bid at that, but it wouldn't surprise me. It's a particularly nice, very unusual house, and I suspect the vendor would sell, however strong or weak the market was."

Anscombe & Ringland: Why did they value the house way above the asking-price? "We took it on for what we thought was a fair price. It would have gone for quite considerably more than the asking price, and that price had come not just from ourselves but from other agents who'd viewed it. We had two different parties who, within 24 hours, had offered more. Then they (the vendors) withdrew it, much to our frustration and our buyers'."

Knight Frank & Rutley: "We were involved at the beginning, but there were one or two other agents, so we, in fact, turned down instruction. We definitely didn't introduce a buyer. We introduced one interested person, but she was frightened by the fact that there were too many people involved. She didn't proceed."

Faron Sutaria: Mr Sutaria, the managing director,

was asked if the house was worth the £700,000 eventually offered: "The house was on the market for two days. We felt that the price quoted was fairly optimistic, but, in the final analysis, what I think is not half as relevant as what the open market thinks—and within 48 hours of the house being on the market we had three offers, one of which was at 700."

But had he not originally priced the property at £585,000? "That advice was based on the circumstances of the sale they outlined to us, the period of time in which they wanted to sell, and also the manner. And more than that I'm not prepared to go into. It's very, very hard with family houses of a particular type to be precise at the best of times. It depends on the property and the number of people in the market at a given time. The people that made the offer were looking for something very specific, and there was nothing else on the market at the time which resembled it."

"The one market that has not been affected by the Stock Market crash is the family house market. However, the one single factor which altered the market considerably was the Budget—the number of first-time buyers sharing because of the August deadline, and, second, the increase of disposable income of those earning well. These are not exactly in short supply in the areas that we deal with." ●

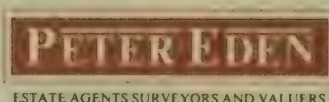
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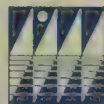


WEST SUSSEX—LINDFIELD

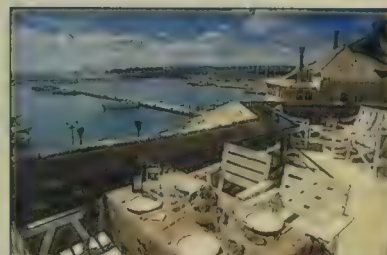
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LOADSAMONEY'S POWER GAME

Is he still a sharp pain in Mrs Thatcher's side, or has he defected to the enemy? Brian Wenham reports

Harry Enfield's oafish plasterer, Loadsamoney, went party political on May 20. Neil Kinnock hijacked him, telling a Welsh Regional conference of the Labour faithful that Thatcherism was serving up a "loadsamoney economy" leading to "loadsatrouble". Judging from the television pictures the solid Welsh audience was more puzzled than enlightened, but then the speech was less for them than for the television audience beyond. And Kinnock was slightly ahead in the moralising game: Mrs Thatcher's foray north of the border, and her own sermon on the mount, came a few days later.

In a way the politicians were slow to get aboard. Loadsamoney had already made his mark on the television fast-set, chiefly through weekly wad-flashing outbursts in *Friday Night Live* on Channel 4. Elsewhere, *The Sun* was using Loadsamoney to give a boost to its lotto and bingo activities. Harry complained but to little avail. At the other end of the market, *The London Review of Books* had Loadsamoney on its normally austere cover. No complaint about that. Nor about the record and accompanying video, which took the plasterer to number four in the charts.

There is nothing new about politicians getting a cultural pick-me-up where they can. Remember Harold Wilson's take-over of the Beatles, and all that chumminess at Number 10. Note, too, the various antics over the recent ITV Telethon. The SLD offered in support its own rhythm trio; David Steel on keyboard, Alan Beith on trumpet, and Archy Kirkwood vocals. The Tories capped that in the spirit of the affair, trundling out Nick Scott of the DHSS, with a cheque for £1 million. The money, a result of a computer malfunction, fell as it were off the back of the DHSS lorry.

There is much more to Harry than Loadsamoney, much of it heard rather than seen. Just turned 27, he's a regular in the business of commercial voice-overs and corporate videos. And he has been the voice behind many of the more endearing *Spitting Image* puppets, not just the two Jimmies, Hill and Greaves, but the political heavyweights too—Geoffrey Howe, Leon Brittan, Douglas Hurd and David Steel. He is not strictly an impressionist, not a Rory Bremner who can hold an audience for an evening with a breathtaking array of straight impressions. Bremner did that, very rudely, at Radio Four's off-microphone Christmas party last year, intoxicating a still sober in-house audience. Harry Enfield by contrast picks up points as an aural caricaturist. His braying Home Secretary, chorussing wildly to a chilling

version of *Cabaret's* "Tomorrow Belongs To Me" on the 1987 election night *Spitting Image Special*, seems now a perfect portent of what was to come. Certainly his wimpish David Steel, threateningly cuddled by the all-powerful David Owen, played its part in sapping Steel's will to continue, although arguably the puppet rather than the voice did the damage.

Enfield's most firmly established character, Stavros the cockney-Greek kebab salesman with a vocabulary all of his own, will probably outlast Loadsamoney. Stavros is a rounded comic creation, a commentator rather than a comment on himself, and the sort of figure well-suited to co-hosting television's night of *Comic Relief*. Sensitive souls complained that Stavros was hard on the Greeks, racist. They had said the same about Lenny Henry's character Delbert. It is a silly criticism. Both Stavros and Delbert are likeable, and likeable characters enfold minorities into the British melting-pot; they do not distance them. Anyway, Stavros has a record coming out later this year. Just watch its progress in the charts.

Loadsamoney, however, is a more ambiguous enterprise. Enfield clearly intends the character to be a sharp comment on the times: "Mrs Thatcher without the elocution lessons", and an attack on a society where "you are what you buy, not what you do". But a boomerang effect set in early. Harry detected it, and looked for counter-measures. In the last few editions of *Friday Night Live*, he went for the spring double and invented a Geordie variant, Biggerall-money, the northern version of Loads, pint-swilling, tab-inhaling, clad only in a T-shirt even in winter because he's "that hard!" It was a smart move, but did not crack the central problem. Money is today's medium of moral exchange.

Even so, it is too soon to say how the Loadsamoney ball will finally bounce. The character seems to pack an explosive potential not seen since Peter Cook's globe-jabbing Macmillan of the early 60s. Cook's send-up seemed kindly enough, but was politically spot-on, tarnishing the Tories with a staid, stuffy, and out-of-date feel. But today's Tories are themselves highly skilled in the art of shifting blame. "Unqualified success" means "to our credit"; "nasty by-products" are rapidly turned back on the public as "your fault". If no suitable section of the public offers itself, then television is usually brought forth to act the fall-guy; and an ever-helpful Press puts its shoulder to the same wheel.

Thus far the technique has worked magisterially, but the early certainties seem less well-rooted, less well-polished. How else to

explain the weekly Cabinet-led appeals in constituencies up and down the country to higher things? However, talk about rowdiness and rough behaviour too often, and you remind your listeners that all is not as well as you once claimed it to be. Hence the importance of putting space between you and the coarse and unruly, trying to get antisocial elements re-assigned to the Labour or Democrat column. It is a task worthy of the best manipulative talents in the land—public relations-men, advertisers, and pollsters combined.

The polls indicate that the trick might be turned. The Democrats face a couple of months of leadership-diversions, doubtless with much potential for ribaldry and send-up; and Labour, despite Democrat disarray and the run of the play for over six months, cannot draw ahead of the Tories, except in the occasional unsustained one-off reading. This in part explains why Kinnock reached out for Loadsamoney's helping hand; maybe Loads could touch a public nerve, land the killer punch that still eludes the Labour leader. So, while the verdict is still out, expect Loads to be pressed into service again and again, before the dust settles, as he was on June 6 when he canvassed for the Labour Party outside Notting Hill Underground station.

Enfield himself is not yet ready to tuck the character away. He does say that he will not go on beyond the point when he and/or Loads are boring people. He would rather quit while he is ahead. Harry's trouble is that he is so far ahead that he may find it hard to quit. There is a Penguin Harry Enfield book for Christmas. Before that Harry, Stavros and Loadsamoney go on an autumnal nationwide tour. Observers of the political scene would do well to be in attendance. Careful monitoring of the Enfield audiences could tell a lot about whose side Loadsamoney is really on. Is he still the sharp pain in Mrs Thatcher's side that he was meant to be; or has he noisily defected, and been taken over by the enemy? Certainly, and ironically, he has been adopted by the monied young he set out to send up.

A footnote on Harry. What about his own increasing wad, his own loadsamoney? He gives the answer common to all the radical comedians from Ben Elton on. If you live under capitalism, you have to do as capitalism does. Either you are in work, or you are on the dole. He is in work, and whether he has a Porsche or not will make no difference to the time the revolution is going to come. Fine, up to a point. Yet if those with loadsamoney so heavily outnumber those with buggerall, doesn't that define the nature of the problem? ●



Harry Enfield—"Loadsamoney"—addresses a young audience while canvassing for the Labour Party last month

ALAN DAVIDSON



Another gripping day for tourists in London

Nigel Fountain follows some visitors to the capital on the trail of the sights of London

They weren't changing the guards at Buckingham Palace, but then it was past six on a Wednesday evening. By the Palace wall two guardsmen almost imperceptibly shifted weight from foot to foot; a Daimler sped in but no flag fluttered from on high.

"She left because she knew we were coming," said Carl. An attorney from New Jersey, cast in the Jack Lemmon mould, he was there with his wife Ros, a teacher.

"Yes," added Ros, "she always does that." They laughed. The couple were last in England in 1972 with their children who have now grown up and left home. For Carl and Ros it is a journey about memories.

In March they visited China, in April it was

Moscow and Leningrad, but now, explained Ros, is the month of Maying when merry lads are playing, a month for England. They had taken in a couple of shows. "We thought *Follies* was uh... visually wonderful," Carl laughs. "Erudite we are not. We are very easy to please." He scrutinised the grey pile again. "Someone's gonna come out, you wait."

At the head of the Mall a desperate Japanese approached me, tourist map flapping in his hand. He gestured towards Trafalgar Square. "Piccadilly?" We pored over his map and I lost myself among the blobs and arrows, even forgetting the name of the Mall. "And there?" he asked, waving despondently.

"Victoria," I replied. "Ah!" he exclaimed, as if Victoria, named for

the Queen Empress, was the most desirable of all destinations. "And there?"

"Buckingham Palace."

"Buckingham Paris."

If the Mall was the Champs Elysées, I brooded, it would be lined with cafés, waiters whistling as the last bar closes, but it isn't. Instead, George VI looks wistfully, as always, out from his plinth in Carlton House Terrace. He stands next to the home of the last Victorian warlord, Kitchener. The King and the Field Marshal are not really the stuff of London tourism; they are the wrong time, too late.

Tourist London is a city walled off from metropolitan realities. In this round of visits to Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London, Madame Tussaud's, the Houses of Parliament

and Tower Bridge, tourists occupy a parallel universe in which they often see a tawdry and venal version of London; they are sold souvenirs at exorbitant prices, they are lectured by ignorant guides and they are served some of the worst of British food.

To become a tourist and to travel round the city produces conflicting emotions in one who lives here. Sometimes, early on, the experience was agreeable.

As we left Westminster on the river trip down the Thames the sky had been overcast, the water slate-coloured, but past the old Shell Building clock—the second largest in the world, said the man providing the riverboat commentary—blue skies emerged.

By Somerset House the Thames glittered. There an earlier London visitor, Canaletto, had painted two views of the Thames, upstream to Westminster Abbey and down to St Paul's. The Italian created a city infused with Venetian sunlight, dominated—as it was—by two great churches. Now they have receded behind modern and post-modern high-rises.

Down towards the Tower of London that day the Lord Mayor of London's May Day "river pageant" emerged. The dignitary was briskly rowed up river, trailed by barges decorated in erstwhile Jacobean style. Mercantilism takes another form in the 1980s and the barges' sides are decorated with the favours of new merchant venturers, sponsorship tags: Legal & General, Bovis, Wates, Peugeot. "Tower Bridge was opened in 1894," said the commentator, "the entrance to the Upper Pool of London. And the Tower of London is to your left."

Yves sees a lot of the Tower. He looks like the kind of Frenchman who would be at home in my tourist fantasy, the Deux Magots, a Gitane dangling from his mouth. But tourist London, and Stonehenge, Bath and Stratford, are his reality, as he shepherds parties of his fellow countrymen in their search for the essence of England, and occasionally Scotland. He came over to teach French and learn English, years ago. Now, six months of the year the tourist beat is his home.

Outside the White Tower he completes the manoeuvres of one of the four main delegations from the great powers—France, the United States, West Germany and Japan—that tramp in at regular intervals to examine the means and ends of Empire. They come, see the Crown Jewels—no stopping on the lower level but you can go round again, ladies and gentlemen—and are conquered. "Do we just come to see the highlights?" says Hattie from Massachusetts, resenting my dumb question. "Why, of course we do, otherwise we wouldn't get the picture, would we?"

The jewels are not all there is to the Tower. It is also sold on torture, executions, a splendid armoury, an impressive regimental museum—for the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers—and Sir Thomas More, a man for all tourist stop-offs. Near the Salt Tower, high on the Wall Walk, three experts and a Beefeater are contemplating a hunched medieval dummy perched in their arms on the edge of a straw palliase. Who is their friend? I ask. The woman expert smiles wearily. "Let's just call him an



The tourist guide's London features genial Chelsea Pensioners and Beefeaters—but no politics

Unspecified Knight." Unspecified Knight tips back on to the bed.

The guide I encounter on my London Transport official bus tour is more dramatic as he profiles the Tower. "If ghosts could walk," he suggests, "then they would be all around the Tower. Perhaps they are." I think not but the nearby London Dungeon has done a good trade in this decade concentrating on this particular myth of the metropolis. "It's very popular with young people," the LT guide booms out across the top deck of the bus, "and with people who like something a bit creepy and messy and ghoulish. They love it, the kids."

Well, maybe. "All hope, abandon ye who enter here," it proclaims over the entrance. It is an overstatement but hope does indeed fade rapidly. The Dungeon takes an eclectic view of the medieval world it purports to portray in cobwebs and half bricks, plastic and wood. Richard II being bled to keep his fashionably pallid complexion rubs shoulders with a 17th-century household of boil-ridden plague victims; the severed torso of Mary Queen of Scots pumps blood, for ever, into a straw basket; every 40 seconds Henry VIII, surrounded by some of his wives, belches as an organist reprises a funeral dirge in the style of the Abominable Dr Phibes.

Near the tea bar Joan and Dean from California compare notes. They had read about the Dungeon in a guide book, but are unimpressed. Dean reckons it is a rip-off, particularly after seeing Stonehenge.

Yet the Dungeon seems to prosper. HMS *Belfast*, the wartime cruiser docked nearby, has been sliding down the tourist charts according

to a gloomy retired sailor on the warship. Perhaps it is not helped by the LT guide's suggestion that the boat is best for navy buffs.

Like the Tower, like the Dungeon, the cruiser has its share of dummies but they, too, seem struck by uncertainty. In a wardroom a dubious-looking officer sporting a vulgar red wig is brooding over some log. In more salubrious quarters an admiral—possibly a relative of Cecil Parker—is being told very bad news by an Al Read-lookalike marine; farther below deck another officer, clearly the recipient of even worse news, gazes despairingly at his bunk. He, too, sports an auburn toupée provided, I speculate, by the sinister marine from a job lot. The only dummies with a workmanlike style are two troopers, 1968 and 1913 representatives of the Royal Ulster Rifles. Brandishing ArmaLite and Lee Enfield respectively, they are there to maintain the disbanded regiment's ancient links with the *Belfast*, and perhaps to prevent any further unpleasantness among the clearly demoralised shipmates.

The dummies' Wembley is Madame Tussaud's, unmissable, according to my ubiquitous London Transport guide. It would be uncharitable to dwell too long on Martin Luther King's resemblance to another, lesser black hero of the 1960s, soul singer Otis Redding, or to speculate on why Sylvester Stallone alone seems more lifelike cast in wax. I was impressed by Rajiv Gandhi until I spoke to Mr H. L. Patel of Bombay, passing through with his two young sons. "He's terrible," Patel observed of the model, rather than of the Prime Minister's politics, "but I quite like the old lady tourist asleep in the chair." Tussaud's trick of mixing waxwork visitors among the rich, famous and rest of us does indicate its skill in manipulating

a generation weaned on television and driven by force of tourist habit to Marylebone Road.

The Chamber of Horrors left Steven and Janet from Stoke-on-Trent unimpressed. The Blackpool Chamber was better, they said. Things jumped out at you, it was far more horrific. Mrs Wade, speaking for her fellow Americans, expressed a justifiable dissatisfaction with the *Pride of Presidents*. Kennedy looks like a Hepworths' mannequin—perhaps appropriately—and Ronald Reagan, well, he, too, clearly gets his hair from the *Belfast*. Not so Mrs Thatcher, sporting a Beverley Sisters' smile as she advances across the floor towards a pensive monarch, surrounded by her royal brood, and flanked by a Prince Philip with the face of a stoker on shore leave.

The past comes alive at Madame Tussaud's, they say. It doesn't, but it does confirm that King John was not a good man and that President de Gaulle was indeed a very tall one. It comes alive more at Tower Bridge where Ian, three hours off the plane from Wagga Wagga, via Zürich, has already had time to dock his luggage at the local youth hostel, take in St Paul's, walk to the Elephant & Castle, and put his £3 down for a tour of the Tower Bridge Museum, a traverse of the two high linking walkways and a wonder at the view.

"It's terrific," says Ian, his unblinking eyes taking in the spectacular view of the Thames, and it is. In the museum lift the attendant is decked out in a style familiar to readers of E. Nesbit and to devotees of the Great Western Railway—in peaked cap and discreet Victorian black uniform. "It isn't advertised enough," says the attendant, and perhaps he's right.

The Japanese love it, apparently. The masterpiece has been open to the public courtesy of the City of London which "provides four bridges absolutely free" for us to feel grateful about. Vaughan Williams-style music accompanies the oleaginous David Jacobs video on the wonders of the Bridge, and they are there. The great metal sinews of the structure plunge down amid the brick and brass and, on a sunny afternoon, it is a splendid place, with the sweep

of the river towards Greenwich and Westminster, up to Whitechapel and down into Bermondsey.

Bermondsey, and more particularly the bleakness of Tooley Street—the lift attendant's home—mildly ruffle the bonhomie of the London Transport bus guide. A specialist in the Stanley Holloway school of method acting, he was at home, away, wishing the Duke of Westminster's billions and the Duke himself good luck in Belgravia and quoting Our Winnie freely across the city. He became a trifle queasy when poverty, or politics intruded. At Trafalgar Square an earnest discourse on pigeon droppings, he candidly admitted, served to take his passengers' attention from the tiresome pickets outside South Africa House.

All would be well when the London Dock-

My schizoid reactions to the tourist city peaked

lands Development Corporation got to work, he assured us. Meanwhile it was, he conceded, pretty grim. "You have to be a comedian to live here," he said, a reflective tone entering his voice, "and the finest comedian who ever lived, Charlie Chaplin, was born here (well give or take a couple of miles), and Tommy Steele, a gentleman if there ever was one." Not to mention Michael Caine, superstar, born a little to our right and, more grudgingly, Boy George. "Round here they are trying to forget that but I keep reminding people," he said to appreciative chuckles from Bill, Betty and Vicky from Utah. "Why should anyone else take the blame?"

Why indeed? Boy George may have made millions but cocaine busts are not the stuff of this London, nor are pickets, reminders of

reality in London and New York, Tokyo and Toronto, far from the barrel organs and Chelsea Pensioners tipping their caps. The pensioners, invisible to most of us, loom large in the world of London tourism. As we pass the Chelsea Hospital the subject is introduced, and our guide returns to it when, bizarrely, a worthy old soldier pops up in a street in the City. "Whenever they go on to the streets of London," he explains, "everyone gives them a salute, as a mark of respect." I gaze down on the impassive City folk and the lone pensioner. "Whenever they go into a local public house everyone jumps up to buy them a drink." My mind flits to my local public house, bewhiskered pensioners crowding the bar, with sturdy, smiling Irish building workers slapping their backs and plying them with porter.

In the mid 1950s one of Thailand's innumerable military strongmen paid a visit to London and dropped in on Speakers' Corner. So impressed was he by this exercise in free speech that upon his return to Thailand he instituted a similar meeting place in Bangkok. The ensuing disturbances, known as the Hyde Park riots, ended both the experiment and the effective career of the supremo. Reality had intruded in a painful fashion. On Sundays near Marble Arch the experiment continues and there the crazed fantasies of the natives are projected on to the dream screens of the tourists. The rest of London, save for police and hot dog salesmen, has voluntarily excluded itself.

It was here that my schizoid reactions to the tourist city peaked. Those Londoners who do make the regular pilgrimage, with the exception of the indefatigable Donald Soper, still on his soap box after 60 years, seem the real stuff of the London Dungeon, the arguers among the crowd at Tyburn, the Sunday visitors to Bedlam. A strange, dark-suited, bowler-hatted figure out of Orton, complete with his born-again badge, harangues the open-mouthed crowd in passing; from soap boxes concepts of Superman are expounded; together with the farther shores of Christianity, obscure brands of Zionism, Islam and Marxism.

Elizabeth is impressed. Such arguments would lead to fights in Stockholm, she says. A policeman is less enthused. "Week in, week out, the same people say the same things." They do, but the tourists still gather, briefly wrapped up in the spectacle. Two bunches of dreamers, one holidaying from reality, the other fleeing it, jostle in the sunshine. Pat and Len from Saskatchewan jetted in the day before, took in *Run for your Wife* and tried for tickets for *Starlight Express*. "Wife was OK," said Len, "enjoyable, not mentally taxing after jet lag."

A heckler, squelched by his supposed target, pauses and stares down his nose. His "Visit Israel Before Israel Visits You" T-shirt glistens with sweat. He looks sad. Farther into the park "Begin the Beguine" wafts across the grass.

That Wednesday I had left Carl and Ros still waiting at Buckingham Palace. "Once you've seen one palace you've seen them all," Carl had said, running through his repertory of tourist one-liners.

"We're going to Stratford tomorrow," said Ros.

"Yes," said her husband. "To see the Bard. He won't be in, either." ●



The Crown Jewels are not for sale, but London yields up other treasures—at a price



The living city

Where to go when the tourist ticket dies

The trick—when the conventional, well-beaten paths have been exhausted—is the discovery of a city which has not had the life and history drained out of it by tourist taxidermy. It was a lesson learnt by Carl and Ros, the two Americans by Buckingham Palace.

Going round the world, spoilt for time, they had ducked out of the dream for a day. Through an embassy contact they arranged a trip to a school in Bow, the real East End, a home, as always, for immigrants. Currently it is Bangladeshi children who jostle with the indigenous population. "That principal—headmaster—he was really dedicated," said Carl, "a real hands-on teacher." A mass onslaught by visitors on Inner London Education Authority schools is unlikely to appeal to the beleaguered ILEA, but close to the traditional tourist beat there is another London, old and new, that has the essence of the metropolis without, very often, the other five million visitors.

HOUSES

Leighton House: Built in 1864-66, it was designed—with the assistance of George Aitchison—by painter and aesthete George Leighton as his town house and studio. In the late 1870s its highlight was added; the Arab Hall succeeds in recreating a Middle East filtered through late Victorian sensibilities. Leighton's friend, the explorer and man of letters Sir Richard Burton, contributed a panel from the Sind, yet much of the Hall was designed in Britain. Even without that centrepiece you could still look at the Pre-Raphaelite paintings by Burne-Jones, Millais and Leighton, but with it you have a masterpiece, complete with a garden. It is pure, undiluted late Victorian England.

Farther west in Stafford Terrace, is the claustrophobic home of Punch cartoonist,

Linley Sambourne. It has changed little since Edwardian times and its walls are covered with his drawings and those of contemporaries Kate Greenaway and George du Maurier.

The work of an earlier satirist can be seen at **Hogarth House**, the country residence of the cartoonist now overlooks the busy Great West Road. Well maintained, it is a typical example of Queen Anne architecture and receives far fewer visitors than it deserves. The wedge-shaped rooms are hung with Hogarth's work.

In *The Man of Taste*, Hogarth satirised the Palladian creation of his neighbour, Lord Burlington. Built between 1725 and 1730, **Chiswick House** was a temple to the arts, with no living quarters. The subtly detailed interiors and gardens were designed by William Kent (also responsible for the Hampton Court murals, the Horse Guards and the Treasury). It became a popular haunt for Burlington's artistic protégés, Handel, Pope and Swift.

For an insight into the lives of more ordinary folk **Dennis Severs** invites you to imagine that the occupants of his Georgian Spitalfields house have just gone out. Then, candle in hand, you can snoop around reading their letters, fingering their clothes and eyeing their food. Every intimate detail is accounted for, even the smells; the tobacco hanging from the walls, the lavender on the linen and the fulsome odours of the Georgian sanitary facilities.

MUSEUMS

If you want to trace the development of the metropolis from the times when elephants were hunted in the suburbs, through the period when the Romans considered Lower Clapton a suitable place for burying their loved ones in marble sarcophagi, past the Great Fire and into the 20th century, then the **Museum of London** is the place. Splendidly designed—and completed in 1976—the museum doesn't reduce its subject to cute stereotypes of plague pustules and

ghosts in the basement. It has not yet become part of the tourist circuit.

The tourists, unsurprisingly, head for the museums in South Kensington. Ted from Los Angeles put the Science Museum way above Washington's Smithsonian in his estimation. He had not visited the **Imperial War Museum** at the Elephant and Castle which, apart from its acres of military hardware, has a fine art collection; the **Museum of Childhood** at Bethnal Green with its astonishing dolls' houses; or the furniture and bygone lifestyle of Shoreditch's **Geffrye Museum**. The Geffrye is very much a local place, with an intimacy missing from grander establishments. Each room is decorated in a different period.

ART GALLERIES

Everyone knows about the Tate, the National and the Royal Academy, but who has heard of the **Crucial** or visited the **Saatchi**? Open for only two days each week, the Saatchi gallery in St John's Wood houses one of London's best collections of modern art. The exhibits change every six to eight months and have included Warhol's and Schnabel's. For talent not yet recognised by the establishment take a trip down to Kensington Park Road. Most notable of the galleries which abound here is the Crucial. As well as maintaining a permanent stable for some 40, mainly British, painters and sculptors it holds monthly one-person shows for visiting artists.

More mainstream but still off the tourist beat is the **Dulwich Picture Gallery**. Sir Francis Bourgeois and Noel Desenfans, its founders, lie entombed beside the collection of old masters, including Poussin's *The Nurture of Jupiter* and Gainsborough's *The Linley Sisters*.

MARKETS

Clustered around Aldgate East, Commercial Street and Brick Lane, **Petticoat Lane** Sunday-morning market does feature regularly in all the tourist guides. Its virtue is that it remains a London market, cheap, resonating with the descendants of the Jewish immigrants of the turn of the century, now blended with the new arrivals from the Indian subcontinent. Cross the Atlantic and you will find its sister amid the streets of New York's Lower East Side.

Drawing in visitors, it does not rely on them. Plastic Toyota police cars from Hong Kong are not really the stuff of which holiday souvenirs are made, nor are dresses from local sweatshops, except when repackaged, as they are, for the West End. I was particularly taken by Jackie Brafman's clothes emporium in Wentworth Street. Mr Brafman guested—as himself, of



Leighton House, undiluted Victorian England

course—in *It Always Rains On Sunday* (one of the best, and most underrated London films), *A Kid For Two Farthings* and *Passport To Pimlico*.

Paul and Etta, pensioners from San Diego, loved it. “Do you know Tijuana, south of the border?” I had to confess I didn’t, and it didn’t matter. “This is so much better, so much more colourful.”

They, meanwhile, had missed out on **Camden Market**, a post-1960s experience, full of hand-made jewellery, ceramics, clothes, silk haberdashery and other crafts, and its older sister, the predominantly “antiques” oriented **Portobello Road** in Notting Hill. Camden flourishes on Saturdays and Sundays, Portobello mainly on Saturdays.

For food and history the meat market at **Smithfield** and the old poultry market at **Leadenhall** must be seen before gentrification completely ruins both. Leadenhall was rebuilt in 1888 and refurbished recently, the original colour schemes have been kept and detail attended to, but the prices are often inflated by patronage from the fairweather city customers.

SHOPS

The guide books concentrate mainly on Oxford Street (department stores) Bond Street (designer houses) and Covent Garden (fashions and craft market) but there are many other interesting areas: Charing Cross Road for its new and secondhand bookshops, sheet music and instruments; Edgware Road for hi-fi and electronic equipment; Southall for saris and Indian goods; Soho for foreign foods and delis; Hampstead for books, clothes and its “village” atmosphere. Specialist shops are hidden round corners or brazen themselves along high roads. The Button Queen in Marylebone Lane specialises, surprisingly, in buttons, another shop, Stanfords in Long Acre, has a huge collection of maps. The best way to find them is to keep your eyes peeled.

WALKS

If you want a *really* obscure trip walk straight down from Highgate tube station towards Archway and branch left. You’ll find yourself on an old railway track (line now removed) which has been transformed into a nature trail and will eventually and pleasantly lead you to the unmemorable Finsbury Park. (Where you can pick up the tube and head back into town.) The trail’s virtue is its mix of the mundane—the nearby homes of the burghers of Crouch End—and the magnificent. The old railway arches combine with thick green foliage to conjure up some lost Victorian city.

For the less adventurous there are plenty of guides offering tours of the city. Customary practice is simply to turn up, the cost, for an adult, is around £3, with under-14s free. Exciting Walks in London (624 9981) covers central London, the East End and Hampstead. Footloose In London (435 0259) specialises in Hampstead, which takes in Keats and Kenwood, Delius and Freud. Streets of London (882 3414) say: “The idea is to take people away from crowded traditional tourist sights.” While Walks (504 9159) specialise in the East End, and offer, amid “Jewish Ghetto Alleys”, the curious prospect of “Michael Caine’s City”.

HIGH LIFE

Postwar London is a city dominated by high-rises, whether 1960s council developments or the skyscrapers of the City and Central London. What they frequently have in common is inaccessibility. You cannot miss, for good or ill, Shell’s monolith on the South Bank, but you cannot get up it. The **Telecom Tower** was open to the public after it was constructed in the late 1960s; indeed a revolving restaurant was supposed to make it a prime tourist attraction. A bomb scare in the early 1970s led to its closure and BT says that security and “additional means of evacuation in case of fire would make it prohibitively expensive to open.”

The spokesman at the City of London’s National Westminster Bank base, the **NatWest Tower**, provided a similar story. “There would be a need to escort people at all times,” said the familiar voice of official England. “The design of the building precludes it. You’d have an unchecked flow of the public coming in.”

They did things differently back in the 17th century, but **The Monument**, built by Wren to commemorate the Fire of London, isn’t a “working” building and you can join the rest of the Great Unchecked for a climb up its 311 steps and a view of the city.

Nearby is the **Lloyds Building**. I belong to that camp which considers Richard Rogers’s 1980s design a valuable addition to the archi-



More colour than Tijuana in Petticoat Lane

ture of London and it is open to the public on weekdays. No, you cannot go to the top, but you can view the deals and admire or damn the steel, glass and tubing.

To confirm what Londoners hardly notice, that the entire city has become a building site take the river boat trip to the Thames Barrier (*not* the eighth wonder of the world by any reckoning except that of the Thames Water Board). As the boat passes Brunswick Wharf the metropolis is picked out like Manhattan: petrol tanks and barges, high rises and water towers, green grass—Greenwich Park magnificent in the distance—and sparkling water.

But for one of the finest vistas in London go to **Kenwood House**. The 18th-century Robert Adams’ house is worth seeing for its collection of Gainsboroughs and Romneys, Reynolds and Vermeer, but the real delight is the landscaping down from the house and the view of Hampstead Heath and the capital. A neat cast-iron stand just outside the grounds takes in a view that stretches for miles. But assume you will be accompanied by a varied assortment of small, medium and extremely large dogs.

—By NIGEL FOUNTAIN.

DETAILS

Books: *London: Louise Nicholson’s Definitive Guide* (The Bodley Head, £9.95) isn’t but comes close. Ian Nairn’s 1960s classic, *Nairn’s London* has just been republished in a revised edition by Penguin at £8.95.

Chiswick House (995 0508): Burlington Lane, W4. Turnham Green tube. Open 9.30am-6.30pm (closed 1-2pm). Adults £1, concessions 75p, children 50p.

Crucial Ltd (229 1940): 204 Kensington Park Road, W11. Notting Hill Gate tube. Open Tues-Sat 10am-6pm. Free.

Dulwich Picture Gallery (693 8000): Gallery Road, SE21. Brixton tube. Open Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, closed 1-2pm, Sun 2-5pm. Adults £1.50, concessions 50p, under-16s free.

Geffrye Museum (739 8368/9893): Kingsland Road E2. Old Street tube. Open Tues-Sat (and bank hols) 10am-5pm, Sundays 2-5pm Free.

Hogarth House (994 6757): Hogarth Lane, Great West Road, W4. Turnham Green tube. Open Mon, Wed-Sat 11am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. Free.

Imperial War Museum (735 8922): Lambeth Road, SE1. Elephant and Castle/Lambeth North tube. Open Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 2-5.50pm. Free.

Kenwood House (348 1286): Hampstead Lane NW3. Hampstead tube. Open daily 10am-5pm. Free.

Leighton House (602 3316): 12 Holland Park Road W14. Holland Park tube. Open six days 11am-5pm (closed Sundays). Free.

Linley Sambourne House (Victorian Society 994 1019): 18 Stafford Terrace, W8, High St Kensington tube. Open Wed 10am-4pm, Sun 2-5pm. £1.50.

Lloyds of London (623 7100): Lime Street, EC3. Liverpool Street/Bank tube. Open Mon-Fri 10am-2.30pm. Free.

Markets: **Camden** market NW1, Chalk Farm, Camden tube. **Leadenhall** market, EC3, Bank/Monument tube. **Petticoat Lane** E1, Liverpool Street/Aldgate tube. **Portobello Road** (W2, Notting Hill Gate/Ladbroke Grove tube. **Smithfield** market EC1, Farringdon/Barbican tube.

Monument: Monument Street, EC3. Monument tube. Open Mon-Fri 9am-6pm, Sat, Sun 2-6pm.

Museum of Childhood (980 2415): Cambridge Heath Road E2. Bethnal Green tube. Open Mon-Sat 10am-6pm. Free.

Museum of London (600 3699): London Wall EC2. Barbican tube. Open Tues-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. Free.

River trips: For destinations up and down river, boats leave from Westminster Pier (930 4097), Charing Cross Pier (930 0971), Tower Pier (488 0344), Greenwich Pier (858 6722/3996).

Saatchi Gallery (624 8299): 98A Boundary Road, NW8. St John’s Wood tube. Open Fri-Sat 12-6pm. Phone in advance. Free.

Dennis Sever’s House (247 4013): 18 Folgate Street, E1. Liverpool Street tube. Three, three-hour tours a week. Ring for details. *All details apply to the summer season only and may change after September.*

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Is it really that hot?



The scene is a wedding reception. The happy couple are two members of the journalistic staff of the country's newest, most vital, most lauded, most virtuous newspaper, *The Independent*. The editor, Mr Andreas Whittam Smith, is present. His excited condition attracts comment. It appears to be the result, not of drink, but of strong emotion. He seems to feel that the love and commitment of the newly-weds are somehow an image of the paper; as if the union had been solemnised, not so much in the eyes of God, as under the fearless and compassionate gaze of the eagle which swoops by the masthead on the front page.

Let us draw a contrast with another wedding reception. Again, the participants are colleagues, this time at *The Daily Telegraph*. Again the editor attends. But the behaviour of Max Hastings is rather different. He kisses the bride, who is one of his executives. The groom, a man of great talent and charm, but—alas—a mere scribbler, is ignored. You may believe, as I do, that this is how editors should behave.

It is only one of *The Independent's* many triumphs that it should have achieved the status of a sacred cow well within two years of its birth. That it should have done so has, I would suggest, as much to do with the tone with which its readers recommend it, as with the paper itself. It is the tone used by caring vicars in sermons; by Liberals canvassing voters; by spokesmen for moderate environmentalist groups.

It is the tone which tells that its owner is "concerned" and wishes to convince you that there is more to life than making money and having fun. The readers of *The Independent* are bound to the paper in a holy crusade, to show the rest of us that intelligence, discrimination, seriousness, humour, artistic and literary appreciation, iconoclasm, etcetera, etcetera, still flourish, and can be made to pay.

In short, no one would mind *The Independent* if people would keep quiet about it. If it were allowed to go its own dull, solemn way in peace—like other dull, solemn papers—then there would be no need to point out how dull and solemn it is. But the chorus of eulogisers continues its song, and the publication of a book about the birth of the paper provides the final provocation. Rebellion is called for.

The book is called *The Making of The Independent*. It would be hard to exaggerate the

tedium induced by even a cursory reading, harder still to imagine anyone who might derive pleasure from studying it. Its author is the *Independent's* Executive Editor (Design and Pictures), Michael Crozier. He applies approximately the degree of critical inquiry that you might expect from someone whose livelihood depends on pleasing his subject.

Mr Crozier has a shiny face, a pudding-basin haircut, and a regard for his editor which approaches reverence. AWS, as he is dubbed, is a man "of independence and self-determination", with "a twin-track mind", "an impressive network of friends in the City", and "restless feet", which take him over "the 1,000th bridge" and beyond the Rubicon, "an eagle standard bearer" leading a "new legion of journalism".

To be fair to Mr Crozier, he has an unenviable task. For the problem with his story is that it is no story. It is a record of uninterrupted triumph, achieved by honourable, talented,

The air is thick with the fumes of self-congratulation

resourceful, determined people. There is no drama, because nothing ever goes wrong. This makes it very boring, and also leaves Mr Crozier hard-pressed to know how to fill his 120 pages.

To do it, he is forced to pad like mad. The central part of the book—between "The Dream" and "The Launch"—consists of a fact-packed account of the financial negotiations, a turgid exposition of newspaper technology, and a wearying history of newspaper design. The potentially interesting subject of the recruitment of journalists—some dark stories there, surely?—is reduced to a succession of lists of appointees.

However, there is one moderately interesting fact in the book, that in March, 1985 Andreas Whittam Smith wrote himself a memo in which he said that the average age of his staff should be 35, with NO ONE over 50. Apart from the familiar and sinister narrow-mindedness of this view, it also perhaps suggests that Mr Whittam

Smith (born 1937) and his restless feet may soon be on their way. Or not.

Mr Whittam Smith defined the high moral character of the paper in his message to readers in the first issue: "... to be within the best traditions of British quality newspapers, but at the same time to be classic with a 'twist' ... free to make up our own mind on policy issues ... we will praise and criticise without reference to party line ... political, intellectual and financial independence".

It is not surprising that this visionary message reached the laager at Wapping like the muezzin's call. For those in servitude under the Murdoch tyranny, here, perhaps, was a chance to escape the concentration camp. The many who joined *The Independent* did not take new jobs. They embraced a creed, pure and austere in its doctrines—but not so austere as to require from its converts a vow of poverty. The salaries were comfortable; so, too, was the moral ambience.

Of course, a potent ingredient in Mr Whittam Smith's recipe was political independence. This appealed strongly to journalists sick of being under orders to peddle crass Thatcherite propaganda. But it also offered an enticement to readers; by taking *The Independent*, they could place on record their maturity and discrimination, their contempt for the infantilism of party factionalism.

This was the basic appeal in the celebrated advertising slogan ("It is. Are you?") Who could resist an offer to identify themselves among the nation's intellectual and moral élite?

In one sense the much-vaunted independence is real. There is no Murdoch, no Maxwell, no Stevens, to bellow instructions to a trembling, grovelling editor. In another sense, though—that of political allegiance—it is something of a sham. *The Independent* quite clearly regards the Labour Party as a non-viable relic of the past. While its own financial success is arguably a by-product of Thatcherism, it finds many central features of Conservative Party policy crude, vulgar, offensively materialistic, and generally lacking in essential qualities of "compassion" and "intellectual honesty".

Its inclination is to the centre. Its attitude is one of pallid regret that the Alliance should have made such a hash of the last election, and that its various factions should have become so intent on stabbing each other in the back as to

have no time left to heed, or even read, *The Independent's* stern calls for the national interest to be placed before tribal loyalties. Its favourite politician by far—for his combination of belief in market forces and strong defence with lashings of compassion—is David Owen.

Let us return to the clarion call delivered by Mr Whittam Smith in that first issue. He set out *The Independent's* philosophy towards news. "First, and most obvious," he wrote, "news stories in *The Independent* are longer than the norm. . . . We will try to go further, and use our expert team of specialist writers to analyse and



Andreas Whittam Smith: clarion call

explain." This is largely humbug.

What chiefly interests *The Independent* and its "expert team of specialist writers" is not news stories at all, but "ishshoos". The paper is not primarily concerned with life as it is lived in this country. Its aim is to identify subjects amenable to the "mission to explain" approach, and then to programme the "experts" to bang on in the prescribed serious, well-researched, deeply independent way.

The most obvious, accessible source of stories about life is the courts. Court stories are sad, comic, terrifying, nauseating, ordinary, extraordinary. They do not tell you everything about life, but they tell a little of the truth of it. They speak for themselves. They do not require analysis and explanation. Not surprisingly, *The Independent* hardly bothers with court stories.

On January 11 this year, a trial ended at Ipswich Crown Court. A homosexual fishmonger was sent to prison for a year, having been convicted of two charges of sodomy and one of attempted sodomy. The fishmonger had apparently succeeded in convincing several drunken soldiers that he was a woman, and persuaded them to take part in extraordinary activities in his car. As the judge told the jury, "It could not have been a more unpleasant case for you to hear." Indeed, but it also made a riveting story.

To read it, and make any sense of it whatever, it was necessary to have *The Daily Telegraph*. *The Times* reported the case, but in such a namby-pamby way as to make it unintelligible. *The Independent* carried no report at all.

This cannot have been as a result of squeamishness. We remember the frank and fearless decision to print in full the offensive words allegedly directed by the Pakistani umpire Shakoor Rana to the England captain, Mike Gatting.

So the decision not to tell its readers about the deviant fishmonger must have been taken on different grounds. It is not hard to imagine them. I picture a man in glasses rimmed with blue plastic, who wears a safari jacket, drinks white wine diluted with soda, works out in a

gym with his wife, and takes his family on holiday to a converted mill in Languedoc. He is saying: "Do we really want to pander to this sort of taste? I mean, if people want pornography, let them read the *Telegraph*. Are our readers into this muck?" The answer, of course, is that they are—or that if they're not, there's something wrong with them.

Instead, that day, January 12, the readers of *The Independent* learned—if they could be bothered—that "ILEA were being urged to establish fitness levels for all pupils"; that "an ILEA worker was claiming racial bias"; that "a lecturers' pay award might settle colleges dispute". On the features pages they could have studied a theory that Cervantes was a homosexual, or William Rees-Mogg on sound principles for investing in the City. Under "Health", they could have informed themselves about the dangers of contracting gastro-enteritis in ethnic restaurants, and the incidence of nystagmus (the sideways flickering of the eyeballs).

To be an *Independent* reader is to undertake a programme of education. And now we are threatened with a forbidding intensification of this programme, in the shape of a Saturday magazine, due to appear in September. This will, we are told, concentrate on "serious in-depth features". We can be sure that it will be resolutely "anti-gloss", and that it will view "leisure" as a social issue.

The Independent prides itself on many things. One is its use of photographs. In no other area is the paper's satisfaction with itself so apparent. As it is not particularly bothered about news, it has had no difficulty in separating the functions of print and picture. The photographs, large, striking, terrifically iconoclastic, stand on their own, demanding to be admired. *The Independent* likes pictures of choirs and churches, of modern works of art and new buildings, of brass bands and circus performers, of dozing antique dealers and Muslims at prayers.

They are so very clever, the pictures. One can almost hear the appreciative murmurs on the picture desk as the photographers reverentially handle each other's work. The air is thick with the fumes of self-congratulation. What matter if the results have nothing to do with news?

So, if the *Independent* reader is presumed incurious about homosexuality and transvestism in the wet fish trade, and other quirks of low life, what are the subjects approved by Mr Whittam Smith? Predictably, health and its detestable offspring, dieting, are major pre-occupations. So is education, from the consumer's point of view, naturally (for homework, read "Practical Parentcraft" and "Knowledge is the Best Contraceptive".) The media is an essential subject; journalists writing about journalists for the benefit of media people. The condition of the art market: a daily bulletin is absolutely necessary. And the Arts, of course, are VERY IMPORTANT, the tone of coverage distinctly improving ("In the last week, that empty space in any culturally aware Briton's imagination has been filled with a new word, the *Mahabharata*").

But it does not do to be too serious. *The Independent* prides itself, and its readership, on having a serious sense of humour. So we come to the Kington question.

Miles Kington seems an amiable chap, keen on old engines, with an engaging line in chit-

chat. But funny? I wouldn't know, having virtually no sense of humour. Some of those I have consulted think he is, some not. Those in the first category usually offer the qualification "sometimes", adding that no one can be expected to be uproarious five or six times a week.

Kington's column appears on the leader page, a medicinal smile among the frowns. Doctor Whittam Smith, perceiving his patient to be in need of a pick-me-up after grappling with the leaders and the main feature (perhaps Peter Kellner on polls, or Ronald Dworkin on higher education), prescribes a dose of Kington. Rewarded with a wan smile, he pronounces the patient fit to tackle Peter Jenkins. Faced with the prospect of a 2,000 word drone from the authentic voice of the redundant and impoverished soft Left, the patient suffers a relapse.

Those who seek, in our best interests, to ram *The Independent* down our throats, will usually maintain that the vital factor in their loyalty is "the quality of the writing". They will mention Miles Kington, and possibly Peter Jenkins (though probably not Peter Kellner). They will certainly allude to the "star" foreign correspondents: Rupert Cornwell in Moscow, Patrick Marnham in Paris, James Fenton in Manila, Alexander Chancellor who was in America.

It would be idle to deny that these four—and several others on the extensive foreign staff—provide much that is authoritative and informative, and some that is entertaining. But the trouble with writers is that they want to write, even when there is nothing which, in terms of news value, demands to be written about. The result in *The Independent* is a mass of feature material, and a distorting concentration on countries and cities where correspondents are based, or which they happen to be visiting.

Of course, the paper has decent writers (mostly lurking in the sports pages). But, by God, doesn't it have dull ones, too? There's



They're not. Are you?

Advertising for the élite

absolutely nothing wrong with this. Newspapers need guff to fill their columns. What distinguishes *The Independent* is its belief that its guff is superior to anyone else's—indeed, is not guff at all—and its success in convincing its readers of that belief.

An odour of sanctimony—disguised as sanctity—pervades the paper, like that of wet rot. Preaching in a lofty moral tone, *The Independent* seeks to improve us all by changing our image of the journalist. It wants journalists to be respected, instead of fulfilling their proper role in society, which is to be disliked and distrusted. It wishes to lift them from their ordained place—which, if not necessarily the gutter, must be the seamy side of life—and put them in the lecture hall. It is a frightful prospect ●



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THE APPEAL OF THUNDER

Matthew Fort admits to the unaccountable British predilection for picnics

It was the peal of thunder that brought it all back. I associate peals of thunder with picnics: brass bands with parks in summer, tolling bells with Italy, swearing with fishing, and thunder with picnics.

It was the mellowest of summer days. A light breeze moved gently through the leaves. The river gurgled at our feet. A couple of bottles of hock cooled in the limpid waters. The turtle doves cooed overhead. The wicker hamper creaked as we opened it, and, in a trice, there on the greensward was a crisp white cloth edged with flowers embroidered in exquisite *petit point*. A neat stack of plates held down one corner of the cloth, and then, spread over the rest, a cold roast chicken, damp and dainty cucumber sandwiches, more robust ones of ham and mustard, hard-boiled eggs, a bowl of strawberries, a bowl of sugar

and a brimming bowl of cream.

There was the succulent pop of a cork being drawn, the glottal glop-glop of the pale honey-coloured wine being poured into the glass. Yes, I thought, this is it. God is in his heaven, and all really is right with the world.

And then came the thunder.

Why is it that a wicker hamper which takes two minutes to unpack, takes 10 minutes to repack? Why is it that you are persuaded in a moment of romantic weakness to park the car half a mile and two fields away? "But, darling, it'll be so much nicer, a ramble across the water meadows to some secluded spot..."

The rain caught us when we were halfway across the first field. When we finally got to the car we couldn't drive away because I couldn't see because the windows had misted over because our clothes were so wet.



JOSEPH SHARPLEY

It is a mark, I think, of the inherent optimism and romanticism of the English that I am preparing for the new picnic season not one whit deterred. We have elevated the picnic to a prominent position in the gastronomic pecking order,

undreamed of by the more climatically favoured French and Italians. Do they freeze in evening dress as we do in the gardens of Glyndebourne? They do not. Would they be prepared to sacrifice health and humour to drink

PUFF FOR LE SOUFFLE

Kingsley Amis finds exceptional service at the Intercontinental

Situated just off Piccadilly by Park Lane, this place offers a handy rendezvous for pre-dinner drinks, and there was hardly a seat to be had when I arrived in its cocktail bar just before seven. Service nevertheless was jolly energetic, and my Dry Martini arrived so promptly that in the circumstances I felt it would have been churlish to complain that, though almost cold enough, it had not perhaps been freshly made for this customer. Things were much easier at lunch-time, especially if you sat near the bar where you could be seen.

At lunch-time again you miss the pianist, which is a mixed blessing. The evening I heard him he was most acceptable with his 30s and 40s selections, swinging in the old way and hitting the keys a

bit instead of caressing them. I found him good enough to listen to, which is all wrong for those who have come for a convivial chat. If there must be music in such spots—and really, *must* there be?—let it be worth nobody's while to pay any attention to.

In sound hotel style the bar also offers snacks, a choice of a dozen elaborate sandwiches that certainly read very well on the list. There is also a selection of wines by the glass to wash them down, including a Chablis Fourchaume at £6.50 and a venerable claret, Château Gruaud-Larose, at £10. I advise readers to fight shy of these as pre-prandial drinks, merely on the general grounds that most stomachs have been brought up to expect food with wine and can turn stropy if all they get for the

moment is wine with more wine. You may take a small glass of undistinguished dry white.

The dining-room is pleasantly proportioned and furnished and comfortably laid out. Parts of the décor, however, will offend the eye of most responsible citizens, in the shape of glass-topped boxes hung on the walls and displaying various hard-to-classify objects that might be misshapen doilies, items for a children's sewing exhibition or (seen across the room) squashed parrots. The terrifying thing is that someone changes them round every so often, so you may see a different lot next time. Oh well—I can put up with that kind of stuff as long as I keep my mind firmly off the size of the fee the artist probably picks up for his "work".

Noticing the word soufflé here

and there I made up my mind to try one. Something about the size and shape of a collapsing fez arrived, containing crabmeat, sweet mustard and other things, and nice enough it was, I suppose, though I felt a bit of a fool eating it. I found more acceptable a concoction of sweetbreads, goose liver (specially delicious) and a kind of potato pancake. Followed perhaps by a bite of cheese it would have made a fine light lunch in itself, and

Something about
the size and shape
of a collapsing
fez arrived. . .

with much reluctance I had to leave some in order to accommodate later material. Lobster salad with crab fritters and scallops with cucumbers went down well too.

Main courses were less straightforwardly enjoyable. At Le Soufflé they go in for that routine of bringing your food to the table

ice-cold champagne in pouring rain as we do, waiting for play to start again at Wimbledon? They would not.

But in this country we speak of picnics with shining anticipation. "Let's have a picnic," we cry, "it's a lovely day," ignoring weather forecasts, discomfort, inconvenience, uncertainty, midges, ant-heaps, the unsatisfactory nature of the food, the likelihood that the next free patch of ground will be occupied by a writhing couple with a ghetto blaster, and past experience.

Personally some of my happiest picnics have taken place in winter, as fishless fishing trips have melted into extended lunches in the company of Adam the Pole. Adam is a man who travels with a cocktail cabinet in every pocket: one dispensing whisky, another rum, and yet another *krupnik*, a heart-warming concoction of Polish spirit, honey and spices that he brews himself.

A slug of any of these will banish the chill and ease you into the party mood. But before things get out of hand, here is some rye bread topped with a slice or two of *boczik* (smoked belly pork). Splendid, and now for a plate of *bigos*, a stew of sauerkraut, cabbage, onion, garlic, wild mushrooms, tomato paste, more *boczik*, sausage and pork, which has been reheated on three successive days before

being considered ready to eat.

I appreciate, however, that not everybody will want to take Jonathan and Phoebe, Uncle Jasper and Aunt Millie out into the bosom of Mother Nature on a crisp January day. To be truthful, I would rather have those moments of rare rustic bliss on genial, warm, summer days, and I shall be on the look-out for them this year. I have this feeling that it is going to be a cracker of a summer.

But this year I will dispense with the hock, and the damp cucumber sandwiches and the roast chicken.

Cold lamb chops are not everybody's idea of *al fresco* sophistication

If the perfect picnic is to be such an uncommon experience, then the food should be likewise. In my view it should also be easy to eat, require no knives and forks, and produce minimal detritus.

For a wine drinker this can mean only one thing—champagne. The champagne removes its own cork, so dispenses with the need for a cork screw. There may be beer-drinkers among you, but I leave such to their own devices.

Now what can you eat with

your fingers that goes with champagne? Why, langoustines, of course, all the way from Scotland, boiled for seven to 10 minutes, and then allowed to cool in their own liquor. Spoil yourself if you must by dipping them in herb-flavoured mayonnaise, and remember to put the tails and shells straight into the specially designated rubbish bag. If your local superior food store does not run to langoustines, then a sliver or six of smoked salmon and some fillets of smoked trout should do the trick. They are not as adventurous as langoustines, but they impart a rare feeling of luxury and indulgence, and they are one of the few foods left that we British do really well.

No picnic is complete without a hard-boiled egg of some description, as far as I am concerned. Perfection would be gulls' or plovers' eggs, but their season comes too early for the true picnic period. We can make do with chickens' eggs, but why not try quails' (preferably peeled before you set out) or even ducks' eggs with celery salt?

I am very partial to cold lamb chops, but I know that they are not everybody's idea of *al fresco* sophistication. Cold roast beef has its place, I dare say, or cold pigeon for a change, or a slice of home-made pie of some description, although this rather smacks of pre-planning, a dangerous

precedent when it comes to picnics. Of course, there are people who make all sorts of remarkable titbits to nibble at while the photographer captures the well-ordered sylvan scene, but I cannot really take them seriously. Like the pie, it is all a bit calculated. I bet if I started whipping up a few little filo parcels, and things entwined with shreds of blanched red pepper, the weatherman would soon put a stop to the prospects of them ever making it to a woodland glade.

I suppose we had better have some greenery. I do not want to be accused of recommending an unbalanced diet. How about a selection? Some cold asparagus; some of what the Italians call *zucchini a scapace*, that is, courgettes fried and then marinated in vinegar and mint, and some leaves of peppery rocket, plain and unadorned.

And that just leaves us room for a little pudding, and here I would return to the original menu: a bowl of strawberries, a bowl of sugar and a bowl of cream, each strawberry to be taken and ritualistically dipped first in the cream and then in the sugar and then in the mouth, yours or your best beloved's.

Now drain the last of the champagne, tilt the panama hat over the eyes, lean back and wait for the peal of thunder ●

Matthew Fort is co-author of the Peter Fort column for the Financial Times

under a silver dome which is then abruptly snatched off. They do it without the grim belligerence shown at Le Gavroche but I still dislike it, and on this occasion was doubly disconcerted when the something-or-other of rabbit I had ordered was revealed as altogether unlike any part of any rabbit I had ever seen. I really hate that. When I order rabbit I expect to be able to say at first sight, "Oh boy—rabbit!" What I was given had no particular taste of rabbit, either, so perhaps it was something else entirely.

The liver and bacon was called something much more elaborate and was shy on the bacon and pretty ordinary; the duck and the bouillabaisse-y thing were pronounced well up to snuff; but the restaurant scores more certainly with its wines. A good deal of work has gone into the list. The menu has a kind of mini-list as an unobtrusive helping hand. The wine-list proper opens with a 1945 Château Latour at £450, but the idea of that is just to put the fear of God into the customer. There is a great deal of choice in the lower

ranges and a fine spread of the wines of 10 nations, including England, South Africa, New Zealand and, indeed, Australia.

From the last-mentioned, from the Barossa Valley in South Australia to be precise, I chose a Bilyara (Wolf Blass) Cabernet Sauvignon 1983, a great find at £20.50. It changed extraordinarily in the glass: much too much of a good thing on pouring, beautifully smooth after 10 minutes. Highly recommended—but there is a great deal here to explore.

Service at Le Soufflé is delightfully friendly at all levels, elevating the mark for the overall performance to something like six or seven out of 10. Alas for London and for the eater-out in London, there are not so many establishments with such a score that anybody can afford to pass this one over. You can have a very enjoyable party here ●

Le Soufflé, Intercontinental Hotel, Hyde Park Corner, W1 (409 3131). Mon-Fri 12.30-3pm, 7-11.30pm; Sat 7-11pm; Sun noon-4pm, 7-11pm. About £55 for two, excluding wine



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(For introduction see *Serpentine*, page 19)

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MASTERS OF THE ARTS I

The first of three interviews by Brian Wenham with the new directors of London's art houses

RICHARD EYRE

POISED FOR ACTION

Chosen as director of the National Theatre in January, 1987, Richard Eyre takes charge on September 1. He has borne the elephantine gestation period with good grace, and has not been idle. In a fine flurry of directing, he has brought *Tumbledown* to the small screen, Charles Wood's story of the maiming of Lieutenant Robert Lawrence in the Falklands; and at the National itself he has orchestrated Miranda Richardson's debut in a production of Middleton's *The Changeling*.

When we met, rehearsals for *The Changeling* were hard upon him, as was planning for his first full season. Eyre, 45, is soft-spoken, economical with words, and quick to the point. His spartan office gives the impression of someone who has not yet fully moved in. Once he has, he says he will display the kind of bookish clutter you would expect of a National Theatre director. For the moment what catches the eye is a quote from Voltaire: "Whoever condemns the theatre is an enemy of his country"—"very good, that," said Eyre—and a couple of "doting Dad" photographs with daughter Lucy. He had just had a morning with the National's accountants, but on balance looked none the worse for it.

The new regime at the National will be something of a two-hander. Eyre wanted, and the board agreed, an executive director, working alongside in effect as a full-time, in-house producer. That

job has gone to David Aukin, who comes to London brandishing a strong reputation from the Leicester Haymarket. The pair practise a form of on-site *perestroika*. Any company of 500 to 600 souls has a tendency towards bureaucratisation, messages passing from messenger to messenger before reaching their intended destination. Eyre and Aukin prefer a more open-door, face-to-face way of working. It has its drawbacks. "Sometimes I get the feeling they will still be queuing up to see me at nine in the evening; a little like being a colonial officer," comments Eyre, not bothering to hide his own *Sherborne* and Cambridge middle-class origins. But he resists being drawn into direct comparisons with earlier times, either those of Lord Olivier working at the Old Vic, or those of Peter Hall who brought the company to the South Bank.

"Hate that," he says of those who get stuck into over-the-shoulder sniping. "So ill-mannered." Eyre says he will find it painful to turn aside from film, even for a while. He will deliberately steer clear of any "sabbaticals" for the first three National years. "I took me a long time to become a confident person," he muses. "But with the last three films—*Past Caring*, *The Insurance Man* and *Tumbledown*, all for the BBC—I now think I know how to do it."

He thinks there is a complex argument to be had about a

"feature-film" as against a "television-film", and he reckons much of the current talk is based on cultural snobbery. If a film spends more, or simply gets a cinema airing—which BBC films currently do not—then critics put it on a higher plane, speak of it in more respectful tones. "But I'd be happy to put *Tumbledown* up against *Platoon*, and have the argument about which is the truer film," says Eyre. So too, I suspect, would any unblinkered viewer who appreciated the compassionate, yet tough understatement that Eyre brought to the Falklands piece. There will still, however, be film in the family. Eyre's wife, Sue Birtwistle, is an established producer, currently at work on a new script by Andrew Davies, the writer behind *A Very Peculiar Practice*, far and away the sharpest television series of the past few months.

But why should Eyre wish to go back to theatre full-time? Although he has more than kept his hand in over the years, with a string of productions that includes *Gyps and Dolls* and *The Government Inspector* at the National, and *Kafka's Dick* and *High Society* elsewhere, he last ran a theatre—the Nottingham Playhouse—10 years ago. Since then, he has relaxed the mixed diet. Yet there is nothing half-hearted about the new engagement. "I am interested in the theatreness of theatre, as I am in the fitness of film," he says. "I mean theatreness and

not theatricality. Theatricality is usually used in a pejorative way, indicating false, artificial." What excites Eyre about the theatre is the live involvement both sides of the lights, and what that does to each and every performance. At its best the relationship can be "incandescent", he noted, as when the *Gyps and Dolls* audience rises to its feet as one, stamping and baying for more. And then there is always danger.

He recalls a long-ago meeting with Peter Hall, at Nottingham. Eyre was directing Trevor Griffiths's play *Comedians*. At the end of the second act, the central figure turns on the audience, asserting "I am in the fitness of film," he night in question, back from the

audience came a firm ladylike counterblast. "You didn't. You absolutely didn't." Hall was beside himself with admiration. "How did you do that?" he asked backstage. Eyre had not in fact "done it". The incident was in the broadest sense simply part of the night's theatre.

Eyre seems to be taking his time coming to terms with his new theatre as a workplace and as a building. Three theatres in one, it lacks an epicentre. The topography of the building causes him visible distress. In traditional Victorian theatres the offices tend to be grouped around the auditorium. You know where you are. "Here," and he gestures up, down, sideways at his riverside desk. "I've

no idea where the actual theatre is. Any of them." As a start he thinks he will introduce a Tammy, as one way of improving communication around those awkward corners. The National's concrete imposition has come in for its share of criticism over the years. "An architect told me the other day that it is really one of the last medieval buildings in Europe—hard lines, solid, immutable." So he toys with ideas that might soften those lines, much as a cathedral will embrace internal decoration and display. "You don't mean trellis-work, then?" I inquired. "Oh, no. Not that. But using lighting and banners, particularly to soften the foyers spaces." In any case, perhaps the building is already worm-

ing its way into our affections. In the end, of course, the play's the thing, and over the years the quality of most productions at the National has well earned the Bernard Levin seal of approval. How will the mix change with Eyre doing the choosing? "You mean what will be the different colours on the palette?" Eyre defines, and then goes on to outline a rich mix for the autumn and beyond. He will be running the Olivier and the Cottesloe in tandem, giving the company a chance to try out everything from the experimental and small-scale to the grand. The Cottesloe will start the autumn with a new three-hander, *Mrs Klein*, about Melanie Klein, and written by the theatre's adviser

on new plays, Nicholas Wright. There is a new David Mamet play to follow. Declan Donnellan, who built up his own company, Cheek By Jowl, makes a National debut, with a Lope de Vega play. And Tony Harrison, who also advises Eyre on classical writing, has a new piece on the Manhattan Project. This will be music theatre and Eyre hopes Mrs Harrison, the opera singer Teresa Stratas, will be in it. At the Olivier, Eyre himself will direct Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, and a *Hamlet* with Daniel Day-Lewis. Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* follows, as does an Israeli play *Ghetto*, set among actors in Warsaw. "It's not exactly a Holocaust piece," says Eyre. Included too is an Angela Carter version of Wedekind's *Lulu*. "How free a version?" I probed. "Faithful to the original, but Cartersque," came the answer.

The plans for the Lyttelton are both more limited and more flexible. Eyre aims to use the Lyttelton

He so clearly appreciates all aspects of the business

as the base for bringing regional productions in and for sending London productions out. And there will probably be longer runs than in the other theatres. A new David Hare play, set in 1988 rather than the Second World War, leads off; then Peter Gill will do the three O'Casey Dublin plays, and Christopher Hampton has a new piece set in Alexandria at the time of Suez. "It's his *Empire of the Sun*. He was there at the time of Suez, as a boy," Eyre noted. "Of course, it's all water through the hands. You never know in advance what will work, what not. But one of our problems, paradoxically, is success. *Gyps and Dolls*, for instance, could have gone from here, and played three years in the West End. But what does that do to meantime to the company? The money's welcome, but we are funded to keep a repertoire going. Sixteen new productions a year, at least. That's the priority."

What did he think of his close neighbours, the South Bank Centre—also with three varying spaces—the National Film Theatre, and the Hayward Gallery? There's a move to create major artistic events, roping





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Overture

everyone in. *End Games*, covering late work in film, music and theatre, and spreading for 10 weeks from April to June, has been the most substantial effort so far. And, over the river and north a little, the Barbican has hired Humphrey Burton, seemingly to give a similar and rival push. Eyre is wary. *End Games*, he thought, had not really come off; Eyre found the concept "too much of a catch-all, too generalised. I suppose the truth is that we'll always collaborate, but on a basis of self-interest. That is how I believe the best projects will emerge." As for the Barbican, London home of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Eyre falls back on a geographical bewilderment. "I filmed a scene for *The Ploughman's Lunch* there. So I'm all right once I'm inside. But I still find it hard to steer a course to the place. It has something to do with the City; the City is like a Parisian *quartier* in which you hesitate to tread. So I don't go as much as I should."

Any troubles looming, I asked, on the boardroom front? Churchill's daughter, Lady Soames, is to take over as chairman. I recalled the row there had been over Hochhuth's *Soldiers*, not a pro-Churchill piece. Eyre expressed no qualms. "I think the National's Board has always behaved in an exemplary fashion. When the storm broke over *The Romans in Britain*, which most of them probably hated, they stood by Peter. In effect, they said, it is the artistic director's job. We back him." Or sack him? "That's their privilege, in the last resort, of course. But that is how it should be. Support for the director, for as long as he is the director. And support openly and consistently given."

"I can't seem to find any enemies of Eyre," I said. "I don't seem to engender enmity—to a fault," said Eyre, and then repeated "to a fault". It is as if he wants to doubt his own popularity. Yet his selection to succeed Hall was greeted with coast-to-coast dressing-room hurrahs. He so clearly knows and appreciates all aspects of the business. Writers, such as Alan Bennett and Trevor Griffiths, he would count among his closest colleagues and friends. He once tried writing, adapting Jennifer Dawson's *The Ha-ha*, and he still feels himself something of a vicarious writer. He reckons to filter out three or four scripts a weekend from the 500 submitted yearly, for homework. He has acted a little, but says he is too self-monitoring to be much good.

He says he's a decent mimic, though, and—as proof—offered up a spirited rendition of the style and language of the Nottingham burghers he dealt with in the 70s. Apparently, they kept telling him to get a haircut. (Incidentally, it is not true that Richard Eyre is generally known as Pubes. Only one person calls him that, Ken Campbell, theatre-person extraordinaire. Campbell used to go and stay at Nottingham. He dubbed Eyre's house Pube Palace, and the sobriquet stems from there.)

"I'll have to go now," Eyre said. "More Middleton?" I inquired. "Not just yet. But I've got to have a word with Daniel about his Hamlet." You felt that Daniel was about to learn much to his advantage. We had talked for a couple of hours and, perhaps surprisingly, without dwelling much on political realities; neither today's cocksure Conservatism—even though Eyre readily acknowledges it keeps a

It is
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directly
confrontational

firm money-conscious foot on the Theatre's neck—nor the limits of the new listening Labourism, though Eyre harbours more than a nostalgic loyalty to socialist ideals. These external realities seemed less pressing than the day-to-day work of the theatre, and in particular the theatre that Eyre and Aukin will shortly take on.

Some commentators, noting the new director's mild manner, and what they call his "gentleness", seem to hint that they expect him to bend in the wind. "That's not how I remember you," I said, recalling days working for BBC Television when Eyre stubbornly held out for what he wanted and what he thought was right. Diffidently Eyre allowed that he was "very, very tenacious". His style can be misleading. It is not his way to be directly confrontational, either outside the theatre or within. But he most surely means to have the theatre run his way. What's more, he can be relied upon to be cussed and unflinching in proper defence of the controversial. Enemies he may not have, but he is more than game for a good fight ●

DOUBTS ABOUT OPERA

By Stephen Fay

Nicholas Hytner's brilliance as a director of opera is widely recognised now. But while his productions are applauded for their accessibility he still considers the art an impossible mirage

In mid May there were five operas in the repertoires of the Royal Opera and the English National Opera, and three of them were the work of a 32-year-old director named Nicholas Hytner. *The Magic Flute* and his revival of *Xerxes* were playing at the Coliseum and Michael Tippett's *The Knot Garden* at Covent Garden. The reviews ranged from respectful to wonderful. If it were to go on like this there would have to be a reference to the Monopolies Commission.

Hytner's defence against the charge of hogging the market would come as a surprise. He would plead that he is first and foremost a theatre director; that he considers opera an impossible mirage; that he cannot cope with the Royal Opera House, and that he cannot see himself working on more than one opera a year from now on.

He would, however, have to allow planned productions at the Coliseum, Geneva and Glyndebourne to be used in evidence against him. His case would rest on his permanent job as associate director of the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester; his new production of *The Tempest* with the Royal Shakespeare Company this summer, and the exciting prospect of a debut at the National Theatre next year.

Hytner is just too old to be a prodigy. At his age Peter Hall and Trevor Nunn were directing the RSC. But his work is the most exhilarating on show in London. His Papageno catches live doves in



RICHARD H. SMITH

Hytner directing *The Magic Flute* for the Coliseum: "I have an aptitude for large-scale spectacle"

the *Flute* and Handel's *Xerxes* is set, perfectly plausibly, in an 18th-century pleasure garden. "I've always enjoyed big shows, and I have an aptitude for large-scale spectacle," he says. This has already been spotted by Andrew Lloyd Webber, who asked Hytner to direct his next musical. (Hytner turned down the chance of acquiring a fortune to complement his growing fame.)

The evidence of this exuberant talent was first revealed at Cambridge. Although he learned the piano and the flute during a comfortable upbringing in Didsbury (his father is a barrister; his mother works for Granada Television), when he went to Manchester Grammar School he decided he must become an actor. At Trinity Hall, where he studied English, Hytner discovered that while his acting was not good enough, he did have a flair for conceptualisation and interpretation. Therefore, he would direct. Moreover, he discovered a spectacular space at the Corn Exchange and announced he would transform it for a production of Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*.

To fulfil this ambition he had to

form his own company, then to persuade Alexander Goehr, Professor of Music at Cambridge, to become its President (he agreed after Hytner convinced him that he would not actually have to do anything) and next to obtain a £500 guarantee against loss. These proved no problem. After all, he had absorbed a basic lesson at Manchester Grammar School: that nothing happens to people who don't work for what they want.

Hytner completed his apprenticeship by directing repertory at the Northcott Theatre in Exeter. At 23 he directed Britten's *Turn of the Screw* for Kent Opera. His reputation as a director of opera was firmly established in 1985 when *Xerxes* won the Olivier and the *Evening Standard* awards.

His face is pale and lean; he dresses neatly but casually, and thinning hair is the only indication of his age. His conversation is intense and articulate, punctuated by delightfully unconditional remarks. For example: "Schiller's *Don Carlos* is a gob-smackingly good play." "The new theatrical excitement in opera is the creation of David Pountney and Mark

Elder at the ENO." "Covent Garden works best when a great foreign genius comes and kicks them around."

Since Hytner does not kick people he has not coped especially well with the Royal Opera House, whose style contradicts what he likes best in opera. He says "For the communion between performer and audience to take place, the audience needs to know what is going on." Consequently, he prefers opera to be sung in English and insists that singers make themselves understood. (Singing in English is not the sole prerequisite; the words of *The Knot Garden* are largely inaudible, but that is mainly the composer's fault.)

Hytner's list of the occasions when the communion has happened to him is woefully short: Pountney's production of *From the House of the Dead* by Janáček and Giorgio Strehler's production of Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*. It is because opera is so difficult to create that Hytner describes it as an impossible mirage, but his standards are intolerably high. I can think of two recent productions that were delightfully created and instantly accessible: *The Magic Flute* and *Xerxes* ●

CHURCHILL'S DYING FALL

NON FICTION

Never Despair: Winston Churchill Vol VIII—1945-65
by Martin Gilbert
Heinemann, £25

When Randolph Churchill began what he knew was going to be a colossal work he declared his intention of allowing his father to be his own biographer. And so it has proved. The work has become even more colossal than Randolph expected. Five volumes of narrative were originally promised, plus five or more separate companion volumes; now we have had eight volumes of

narrative, each one bigger than the last, and 13 companion volumes (with more to come). According to Martin Gilbert, who took over the authorship after the second volume, they total more than nine million words.

Most of them are Winston Churchill's, and there is hardly a dull one among them. They are drawn from his public and private letters, his speeches, dictated notes, minutes and memoranda, articles and books, and from the diaries and records of those who worked with him or who were otherwise lucky enough to know him and share his talk. From this wealth of material Randolph began to compile what he described as a

"filial and objective biography", and Martin Gilbert has discreetly and meticulously followed his example. The result is at times pure autobiography and, given the power of its subject, it is none the worse for that.

The final volume, in spite of the brave title *Never Despair*, which was Churchill's final message to the nation, is suffused with sadness. It chronicles the period from the end of the war in Europe, when Churchill was voted out of office, to the final years when he clung to it in the hope of using his weight to bring the post-Stalin Soviet leaders to the negotiating table, and when he fought the last battle that he could not win.

There were, of course, moments of grandeur, brilliance and greatness. It did not take him long to recover from the shock of being pushed into opposition. "It may well be a blessing in disguise," his wife, who recognised the need for rest, suggested. "At the moment it seems quite effectively disguised," he replied.

Nevertheless, within months he went to the United States to deliver his "Iron Curtain" address at Fulton, Missouri, where he put into words the facts and fears that the West had until then refused publicly to face. "I have a message to deliver to your country and to the world," he wrote in advance to President Truman, "and I think it



Monet working on his boat at Argenteuil, painted by Manet in 1874—
one of the illustrations from *The Studios of Paris*, an account of the life of artists in Paris in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by John Milner, published by Yale University Press at £25.

very likely that we shall be in full agreement about it. Under your auspices anything I say will command some attention and there is an opportunity for doing some good to this bewildered, baffled and breathless world."

Having brought his countrymen and allies to accept the realities of the communist annexation of so much of Europe, he then worked to create the unity of Western Europe and the Atlantic Powers, upon whose combined strength, as he said in a speech in Plymouth a few years later, rested the best hopes for the future. "To work from weakness and fear is ruin. To work from wisdom and power may be salvation. These simple but tremendous facts are, I feel, being understood better than they have ever been before."

The east-west conflict, the threat of a third world war, and the need to make a supreme effort to bridge the gulf between the two worlds, remained Churchill's major preoccupation during his second term as Prime Minister, from 1951 to 1955, and to some extent explain his growing reluctance to hand over to Anthony Eden. "I must see Malenkov," he told his doctor after one of his strokes in 1953, "then I can depart in peace."

He did not get his meeting with the Russians, and as a result he did not depart in peace. Martin Gilbert chronicles in painful detail Churchill's indecision over his departure from office, as he strived in vain to build a path to a summit meeting. In May, 1954 he planned to go in June, in June it became July, in July September, in August he told Eden he would not be leaving until the spring of 1955. And when he did finally go he declared to John Colville, "I don't believe Anthony can do it."

The account of Churchill's last decade makes dismal reading. The flashes of insight and humour became fewer, his melancholy and boredom increased. "My mind is very empty all day," he commented, declaring that he found old age "a feeble substitute for life". He continued nonetheless to make astonishing come-backs between the bouts of apathy, and until the very last days he frequently surprised those around him by his tenacity and resilience, features which more than compensate for the dying fall of this final volume. It is not how Churchill will be remembered, or would wish to be remembered.

Perhaps he would himself most have appreciated the comment the Queen made about him when he was 79, and which the author

quotes from a 1986 television programme. She and her Prime Minister were travelling up the Thames together on the bridge of *Britannia*. "One saw this dirty commercial river as one came up," the Queen recalled, "and he was describing it as the silver thread which runs through the history of Britain... Churchill saw things in a very romantic and glittering way; perhaps one was looking at it in a rather mundane way." The abiding strength of this titanic biography is its constant revelation that life is not, or need not be, mundane.

—JAMES BISHOP

FICTION

Summer's Lease

by John Mortimer
Viking, £11.95

The Kentish Manor Murders

by Julian Symons
Macmillan, £9.95

A Woman of Singular Occupation

by Penelope Gilliatt
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £10.95

IF you have ever rented a villa in Tuscany you will know, as John Mortimer evidently does, the vagaries of the water supply in that region. Mortimer is also intrigued by the experience of inhabiting the homes of strangers. *Summer's Lease*, the fictional product of his preoccupation with these matters, reads on one level like a careful copy-book exercise in writing a conventional mystery story.

Molly Pargeter, a solicitor's wife whose great passions in life are Italian art and detective stories, is hooked by an advertisement for a holiday villa near Siena indicating an oddly precise preference for a couple in their early 40s with three children (females preferred). She drags her husband, Hugh, and their three daughters off to Mondano-in-Chianti, determined to enjoy herself solving the mystery of the Ketterings, the villa's elusive owners. Mrs Kettering is in Rome but nobody seems to know the whereabouts of her husband, Buck.

Mortimer systematically plots his way through Molly's discovery of revealing documents in the attic and her steaming open of a letter addressed to Mrs Kettering. One thing she learns is that Mr Kettering's life is in danger. The same was evidently true of an Englishman called Fosdyke—employed to keep an eye on the villa—whose body is found in an empty swimming pool, the victim of a *crime passionnel*.

In the event, the plot proves less interesting than the characters Mortimer has fitted into it. Though they are not drawn in great depth, one sees them clearly in their social and professional contexts; the dullish Hugh Pargeter, the solicitor, has looks which "endeared him to wives in divorce cases, although his extreme reluctance to take decisions prevented them obtaining the best results".

Others are more colourful, like the elusive, doomed Buck Kettering who runs various enterprises for the crooked entrepreneur Arnold Leadbetter, one of which involves cutting off the water-supply to villas in the arid Tuscan hills and making visitors pay through the nose to have it restored. His fondness for Italian painting adds piquancy to Molly's pursuit of him along the Piero della Francesca trail that leads to *The Flagellation* in the Ducal Palace at Urbino.

Mortimer also excels in vivid, amusing portraits of British expatriates in Tuscany and of the nomadic young, impeccably-behaved while squatting in great houses. Amid all this is an outsize comic creation, the wicked, witty Haverford Downs, a septuagenarian journalist gathering material for his well-turned weekly column, Jottings, while planning to marry Arnold Leadbetter's widow.

There is another amateur detective in Julian Symons's *The Kentish Manor Murders*. This is the actor Sheridan Haynes, celebrated for his readings from the works of Conan Doyle. "Sher"

Affectionate, playful nodding in the direction of Conan Doyle

and his wife Val become involved in a plot to sell the forged manuscript of an unpublished Conan Doyle novel to a wealthy recluse called Warren Waymark. While John Mortimer dabbles in mystery, Mr Symons endeavours to make a teasing entertainment out of a crime story. Sher's professional engagements take him abroad. After some preliminary bizarre adventures in Copenhagen and Amsterdam, he goes to Waymark's home at Castle Baskerville on Dartmoor to give a private reading. The aging, ailing Waymark lives in darkened rooms,

wears dark glasses and gloves which he never takes off. He is shielded from intruders by a sinister retinue, and the game afoot here is a pretty murderous one.

Devotees of Symons will enjoy the story but for me its suspense is undermined by his affectionate, playful nodding in the direction of Conan Doyle. Castle Baskerville, with its Gothic towers and drawbridge, is an amusing conceit. But the gimmick of literary impersonation, with Sher gazing intently in the manner of Holmes whenever he is thinking hard, or slapping his forehead and exclaiming "Of course, what a fool I've been", is counter-productive.

The setting of *A Woman of Singular Occupation* is Istanbul in the Second World War—like other neutral capitals a city of spies and voyeurs, of suspicion and betrayal. Penelope Gilliatt's evocation of this hotbed of intrigue is too obvious and too literal to be convincing—sinister footsteps echoing down the steep, cobbled lanes, eavesdropping waiters at diplomatic receptions where guests indulge in trivial gossip or political speculation.

Loyal wives of a loyal diplomat and a loyal businessman they may be, the American Ann Wisner remarks to Catherine de Rochefauld on the Orient-Express, so why, in July, 1939, are they fleeing from Paris to Istanbul? Catherine, one quickly suspects, is not the confirmed Pétainiste her diplomat husband Jean-Pierre is, although that is not the only reason they lead separate lives. On the train she meets an American banker, Thomas Drake, who cannot wait for his country to enter the war.

The ensuing love affair between Thomas and Catherine has an ambiguity and elusiveness typical of the book as a whole. The longer it goes on, the more inaccessible Thomas finds Catherine, and the sense of this young American's isolation and vulnerability is dramatically conveyed when he is trapped into some indiscretions by a double-dealing fortune-teller. As a result Catherine, who turns out to be working for the Free French in London, is at once in danger.

She remains, however, an impossibly idealised figure, a beautiful aristocratic woman, a brilliant linguist, composer and musician. She makes money for the Resistance by trading world-wide in commodities and communicates her musically-coded data to Carlton Gardens from a short-wave radio in Ann Wisner's house on the Bosphorus ●

—IAN STEWART

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CHEKHOV AT ITS FINEST

THEATRE

By Marcel Berlins

Productions of Chekhov usually reach the commercial theatre by way of transfers from successful runs in the subsidised sector. It was brave of director Michael Blakemore to launch *Uncle Vanya* in the West End. The gamble paid off. This is one of the finest Chekhovs seen on the English stage in recent times.

It is blessed with an exceptionally strong cast. But that alone, as many past disappointments have shown (the most recent National Theatre *Uncle Vanya* among them), is never enough to guarantee good Chekhov. Here, though, exceptional actors have combined to produce ensemble playing of rare sensitivity and understanding. Chekhov's plays, not least this one, are easily spoiled by an imbalance of acting skills. This cast has no weak link.

Some productions of *Uncle Vanya* have suggested that its title should, more accurately, be Dr Astrov. Vanya can be, and has been played as a subsidiary catalytic role. With Michael Gambon in the part it cannot help dominate, even with the excellent Jonathan

Pryce as the soul-weary disillusioned doctor, peddling his environmental causes and taking to the bottle to compensate for the barren state of his emotions.

Vanya, at 47 (Gambon's age too), has sacrificed his hope of a good life to the aggrandisement of the egocentric, third-rate Professor Serebryakov (a splendidly querulous performance by Benjamin Whitrow). Gambon plays him, for a while, as a comic failure, a bulky, shambling untidy figure with dead watery eyes: a man beaten down by the futility of his existence. Even his besotted admiration for Yelena, the Professor's young, beautiful and bored wife, is pursued half-heartedly. He no longer expects to be taken seriously; and he isn't. His transformation when the Professor announces a plan to sell the estate is a dignified attempt to recover his self-esteem. It is a mesmeric scene, with Gambon in turn roaring and pleading, defending himself like a wounded animal, then turning on his enemy in a last desperate murderous act. It fails and, in a few seconds, the old Vanya returns, bowed and beaten, this time for ever. It is a moment of unsurpassable Chekhovian acting.

Imelda Staunton plays the plain, long-suffering Sonya, Vanya's niece, with more animation and passion, and far less sopiness

than the role usually attracts. A brave smile masks her hopeless love for the doctor, made the more hurtful by his nonchalant indifference to her and his infatuation with Yelena. Her final speech to Vanya, resigning them to anguish in this life, in the brave, uncertain hope that there will be rest in the hereafter, is profoundly moving. Greta Scacchi, as Yelena, has just the right combination of tiresome vapidity and lurking sexuality; her languid dismissals of Vanya's clumsy advances are exquisite.

Michael Frayn's new translation removes some of the awkward linguistic infelicities of most of its predecessors without in any way attempting to be modern. He is not afraid to sacrifice accuracy of word for accuracy of emotional meaning, never more effectively than in the crucial shooting scene when Vanya realises that he has failed to hit the Professor ●

PLAYING UP TO IRISH MELODRAMA

By Alex Renton

The word melodrama is losing its sting. Slowly, it is disappearing from the critic's list of pejoratives as yesterday's despised schlock drama becomes almost respectable. Last year the National staged Eugene Sue's *The Wandering Jew* to general incomprehension, but the

Theatre's latest venture into the form, a revival of Dion Boucicault's *The Shaughraun*, is a glorious gallimaufry of a show. It is one of this year's great nights out.

Happily, rehabilitating melodrama does not mean treating it with reverence. Director Howard Davies, the subtle stylist who mounted *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, has approached the 1874 story of scampish Sligomen with tuggish gusto. The impressive plot-laden first scene is of a blushing British officer, Captain Molineux, turning a milk-churn; behind him is an idyllic Ireland—a stone shack set in green turf with the shimmering outline of Sligo Bay behind. Then a colleen giggles from a doorway.

Molineux, a delicious study in Victorian propriety from Shaun Scott, is an innocent, bemused and abroad in a wily Ireland. His fancied colleen is sister to a wanted Fenian, Robert Ffolliott, and the relationship can only help Ffolliott evade capture. Molineux is no villain. He is the most likeable man in the story, but his allies are the gruesomely wicked landlord Corry Kinchela and his goblin of a sidekick Harvey Duff. One into the play and the audience are hissing the Machiavellian Kinchela like a panto crowd.

Frank Delaney has, somewhat aggrievedly, called the play the first to give "English audiences a licence to laugh safely at the Irish". It does indeed enshrine the notions of Irish bog-wisdom and the lovable wastrel; however much Molineux is bedazzled and befuddled, he remains the man in the red coat, the invader with absolute power. Irish resilience is typified by Conn the Shaughraun, vagabond friend of Robert Ffolliott, an Artful Dodger cursed and loved by everyone. Stephen Rea's shaggy scallywag is a character far removed from the casts of melodramas, a Puck, a saint from the gutter, the bad boy who'd die to save his friend and "sing at his own funeral" (Conn does indeed attend his own funeral in a brilliantly defined comic scene).

Conventional perhaps, certainly sentimental, this play is never crude. Most impressive of all is a quiet playing-up to the melodrama: no actor succumbs to the obvious temptation to exploit the more baroque excrescences of language. We are left with a melodrama which has something more, something which is uniquely Irish, and a delightful sense that even Boucicault was gently mocking this most English of theatrical forms ●



Ensemble playing of rare sensitivity: Jonathan Pryce, Michael Gambon and Greta Scacchi in *Uncle Vanya*



Open Air fun: Cliff Howells, Adam Price and Christopher Robbie

BACKSTAGE

ALL THE FUN OF THE PARK

By Julia Brown

Since 1933 the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park has been providing the theatrical profession with its own genteel version of a summer at Butlins. David Conville, the theatre's rumbustious chairman, sporting straw boater and Garrick Club tie, must qualify as Head Redcoat.

Last year, Conville handed over Artistic Directorship to Ian Talbot, whom patrons will recognise as one of the company's faithful actors. They may also recognise some of the costumes, suitably altered to fit incoming minor parts. For the charm of the Park is the charm of the known quantity; the repertoire never fails to include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the bar has been serving mulled wine for the last 26 years—just the thing for a summer's evening.

Talbot sees the current season, which includes *The Winter's Tale* and the Rodgers and Hart musical *Babes in Arms*, as a "mini-Glyndebourne". Both events certainly share a rather quaint pre-war glamour.

But behind the façade it is rather less glamorous. Those who play the smallest roles are drafted into the stage-management team and will be taking down the set each

night while the stars hob-nob in the bar. The journey to the stage from Portakabin dressing rooms is made by creeping through the undergrowth. Common health hazards include hay fever, chills (to which scantily-clad fairies are particularly prone) and sore throats caused by shouting over the din of aeroplanes or the rustling of trees. And then there's the ignominy of being rained on, sprayed with insect repellent or splattered by a passing pigeon.

Yet the Park still attracts newcomers keen to break into the repertory system. The great British families (theatrical and otherwise) have been known to provide juvenile leads. The likes of Natasha Richardson, daughter of Vanessa Redgrave, or Ralph Fiennes, nephew of Sir Ranulph, had little difficulty in being taken on. It seems that its history of employing "those most likely to succeed" has served the Park well since losing its Arts Council grant in 1981. Potential sponsors are readily

impressed by a roll of honour that has included Jeremy Irons, Anna Neagle, Vivien Leigh and even Leslie Crowther. This year Johnson Wax is contributing £20,000; but for a mere £650 the philanthropic businessman can enjoy 50 free tickets, a marquee for entertaining his guests and, of course, a chance to meet the stars ●

CINEMA

ANGELS HELL BENT ON LOVE

By George Perry

Unhappy Berlin, a schizophrenic city still trapped in the clutches of neurosis and melancholy four-and-a-half decades after its cataclysm, is an appropriate setting for the new Wim Wenders film, *Wings of Desire*. In no other place in Europe are the scars of the Second World War so visible or the differences between opposing ideologies more prominently displayed. But the Wall is no barrier for Daniel and Cassiel, benign invisible spirits played by Bruno Ganz and Otto Sander. Observing the city's population, they empathise with the pain of the sick and the suicidal, but cannot intervene. They are angels in heavy overcoats, and can flit effortlessly to the tops of steeples, glide through walls at will, even enter aircraft flying overhead. No secrets escape them.

But Daniel falls in love with a

mortal, a trapeze artist in a small, impoverished travelling circus, played by Solveig Dommartin in a remarkable film debut. Her unusual, striking beauty and athletic skill (she quickly learned the art of the trapeze) give credibility to the angel's passion, his yearning to be a man, perfectly expressed by Bruno Ganz in a performance of great strength and gentleness.

It is postulated that other descended angels live in our midst, having renounced eternity. One is Peter Falk, the American actor who used to play Columbo, seen as himself in Berlin working on a war film. "I can't see you but I know you're there," he tells Daniel as he encourages him to cross the line. After Daniel has made his decision, the monochromatic angelic vision of the world, photographed to silvery perfection by Henri Alekan, turns to colour. The girl is drawn to a tryst with her unknown lover and the film culminates in a powerful dialogue scene in the bar of a disco where at last she can acknowledge Daniel's presence.

Wenders's film is a metaphysical love story. When Hollywood tackles similar themes sentimentality usually triumphs, even if it results in something as masterly as Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*. Wenders maintains a hard-edged European approach, recalling Powell's *A Matter of Life and Death*, in which love also crossed the frontier between earthly and spiritual worlds, but was underlined with an obvious political metaphor. Wenders's film is magically charged with poetry and compassion, and it justly won him the Best Director award at Cannes last year.

John Waters has previously been regarded as a no-go area for respectable people. His earlier films, although remarkable in their originality, have been Swiftian in their satirical thrust and scatological overtones. With his good-humoured comedy *Hairspray* he has become respectable and positively affectionate. The setting is Baltimore in 1962, when teenagers vied to be chosen as regulars on a daily television pop show. Tracy, a lovely fat girl (Ricki Lake), always in trouble at school for "hairdo violations", is selected, enraging Amber (Colleen Fitzpatrick), the bitchy reigning queen. Tracy and her friends, encouraged by the desegregation policies of JFK, like to dance with black youths, provoking a collision with the station bosses.

Waters has an eye for the teen flicks of the period, and cleverly mimics the dance styles. The



Solveig Dommartin with Wim Wenders, making *Wings of Desire*

Reviews

androgynous Divine, a Waters regular, appears in his last roles, as Tracy's monumental mother, for ever at the ironing board, and as the gross, racially-bigoted station owner. Debbie Harry and Sonny Bono play Amber's parents, and Pia Zadora in a black wig appears briefly as a beatnik. It is a delightful wallow in nostalgic kitsch ●

George Perry is also Films Editor of The Sunday Times

Epstein, Moore and Sutherland read Armitage, Caro, Bacon and Freud. But inevitably there have always been exceptions.

The least fuddy-duddy section of this year's (the 220th) exhibition is the sculpture room selected by Professor Bryan Kneale, head of sculpture at the Royal College of Art. He has persuaded Phillip King, his fellow Academician and colleague at the RCA, to make a rare contribution, and has also let



Franz Marc's *Deer in the Forest I*, from the Phillips Collection

EXHIBITIONS

SUN AMID THE SUMMER SCHLOCK

By John McEwen

Confronted with wall after whimsical wall of pictures of Dame Nature on her best behaviour, in a style that reflects the present only in its slack disregard of academic standards, it is quite easy—if you have been a regular visitor to the Royal Academy's **Summer Exhibition**—to become utterly deranged. What year is this? What age am I? Who am I? Why am I? As always one must clutch at straws. The fact is that for the past 80 years artists who have aspired to originality have boycotted the Academy as a matter of principle, a principle as strictly observed as ever: hence for

some younger sculptors in on the act. John Cobb is one of these, at 42 probably this country's outstanding sculptor in wood and well represented here by his impressionistic study of a *Crow*.

In painting, progressives will take due comfort in the strong showing of Craigie Aitchison, who has entered four pictures, including two fine examples of his portraits of black sitters. Jeffery Camp also shows to advantage, with charcoal drawings as well as an enormous oil in praise of youth. Traditionalists will find Peter Greenham in top form as a portraitist and Elizabeth Blackadder, who is a joint winner of this year's watercolour prize, at her rigorous best in descriptions of lilies, anemones and freesias.

To see the originators of so many of the Frenchified ideas rehashed at the Summer Exhibition requires only a short trip to the Hayward Gallery, where **Master Paintings from the Phillips Collection**, Washington, provides a charming, if all too temporary addition to our local holdings of international art of the 19th and 20th centuries. Those who have

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by John Ford



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seen these pictures in the delightfully domestic surroundings of the Phillipses' old family home in America will recognise that the cream of the collection is here, including the jewel itself, Renoir's much-illustrated masterpiece *The Boating Party*. They will also be reminded of the strength of American art over the last 100 years, with fine examples of work by William Merritt Chase, John Sloan, Marsden Hartley and, wildest and darkest of all, Albert Pinkham Ryder; and reminded too of the degree to which Laughlin Phillips, son of the collection's founder, the late Duncan Phillips, has supported contemporary British artists, notably John Walker and Sean Scully, at an early stage in their careers. This exhibition is for connoisseurs, richer as it is in curiosities than masterpieces.

Art being no different from food, in that only a bit can be digested at a time, it is asking a lot of the system to follow the delights of the Phillips Collection with an eyeful of *The Angry Penguins* which accompanies it. On the other hand it is hard to recommend a special visit to see this array of raw work by the angriest young painters of Australia in the 1940s. Two of them, Arthur Boyd and Sidney Nolan, have become probably their country's most famous artists, past or present; and it is the early paintings by Nolan on his most celebrated theme of the armour-suited outlaw Ned Kelly which save this exhibition from disappearing up its own thesis. His fellow "angry penguins"—a self-inflicted group name—painted what was on their minds, but Nolan was already painting Australia ●

OPERA

DRAMATIC FIRST WITH KÁT'A

By Margaret Davies

By engaging the eminent German director Nikolaus Lehnhoff for his British début, Glyndebourne has scored a notable first. His gripping production of *Kát'a Kabanová* is a landmark for the festival and for opera in this country. In power-

fully theatrical terms it projects the repressive atmosphere of 19th-century middle-class Russia, which pervades Janáček's score, through a series of vividly-coloured and dramatically-lit stage pictures, designed by Tobias Hoheisel.

Kát'a is a fragile, supple figure, bending to the currents of her emotions like a reed in the swift-flowing waters of the ever-present Volga. Married to the weak-willed Tichon, but fatally attracted to the vacillating Boris, she is hounded by her mother-in-law and finally driven by guilt to throw herself into the river.

The tension and concentrated brevity of the drama and music are complemented by the designs, which combine a schematic simplicity with a Munch-like ex-



Nancy Gustafson, the American soprano—an impassioned Kát'a

pressionism. The action is set on an undulating ochre-coloured slope; locations are sparingly suggested by a steeple, a blank wall, stooks of corn, a simple table and chairs. Changing tones of the cloudless sky, ranging right through the spectrum, echo the shifting phases of the drama. And visual intensity is matched by the singing of a finely balanced cast and by the playing of the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Andrew Davis.

The American soprano Nancy Gustafson, in the title role, is rapt and fearless, while wild eyes and impassioned gestures convey Kát'a's inability to cope with her tormented emotions. The inhibited Tichon is beautifully sung by Ryland Davies, but Barry McCauley as Boris is a luke-warm lover. A touching contrast is supplied by the innocent young couple, Varvara and Kudrjás, who are ardently played and sung by Louise Winter and John Graham-Hall ●

This production will be revived by Glyndebourne Touring Opera in the autumn and will also be recorded for television transmission and for video

The capital list

A discerning guide to entertainment in the city



The National's *Shaughraun*, with an Irish eye for melodrama



The late Divine with Jerry Stiller in John Waters's film *Hairspray*, a delightful wallow in 60s kitsch

THEATRE

Where applicable, a special telephone number is given for credit card bookings. The address & telephone number of each theatre are given only on the first occasion it appears in each section.

Back with a Vengeance! Barry Humphries's characterisations with the best and worst in Australian taste. Strand, Aldwych, WC2 (836 2660, cc). REVIEWED JAN, 1988.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Tennessee Williams's tale of a warring Mississippi family, with strong performances from Ian Charleson, Eric Porter & Lindsay Duncan. Lyttelton, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (928 2252, cc). REVIEWED APR, 1988.

The Changeling. 17th-century tragedy dealing with sexual obsession. Richard Eyre directs Miranda Richardson & George Harris. Lyttelton, National.

Le Cirque Imaginaire. Victoria Chaplin & Jean Baptiste Thierree star in this mystical show about a circus. Includes trapeze acts & performing animals. Grim stuff. Mermaid, Puddle Dock, EC4 (236 5568, cc).

Cymbeline. One of Shakespeare's major late plays produced by Peter Hall. Tim Piggott-Smith, Geraldine James & Peter Woodward star. Cottesloe, National.

The Deep Blue Sea. Second Rattigan revival of the year. It stars Penelope Keith as a married woman who embarks on a turbulent affair. Haymarket, SW1 (930 9832, cc).

Emerald City. Australian David Williamson's comedy about material success & domestic rivalry. Lyric, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (437 3686, cc).

Fashion. Political dilemmas and personal choices in Doug Lucie's comic drama set in the PR agency handling the Conservative Party's election account. Good, but a touch out of fashion. The Pit, Barbican EC2 (638 8891, cc). REVIEWED JUNE, 1988.

Not to be missed . . . *Uncle Vanya* at the Vaudeville, Bobby McFerrin at the Victoria Palace and the Phillips collection at the Hayward. Stay clear of . . . *Saigon*, an exploitative 'Nam thriller, and the RA Summer Exhibition

The Foreigner. Tom Watt (Lofty from *EastEnders*) as a sci-fi editor works out an involved "No English" gag in Larry Shue's comedy. Albery, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (836 3878, cc 379 6565).

Hapgood. Tom Stoppard's latest play mixes espionage & physics. Felicity Kendal, Nigel Hawthorne & Roger Rees star. Complex & heavy going. Aldwych, WC2 (836 6404, cc).

How the Other Half Loves. First West End revival of an early Ayckbourn comedy. Produced by Alan Strachan; cast includes Gabrielle Drake & Christopher Benjamin. Duke of York's, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (836 5122, cc 836 9837).

Julius Caesar. Terry Hands's production, with Sean Baker & Roger Allam among the cast. Barbican.

Lettice & Lovage. Maggie Smith leads the cast in Peter Shaffer's comedy about the relationship between two formidable women. Globe, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (437 3667, cc 741 9999).

The Merchant of Venice. With Antony Sher's Shylock & Deborah Findlay as Portia. Barbican.

A Midsummer Night's Dream. Return of last year's highly successful production, again directed by Caroline Smith. Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park, NW1 (486 2431, cc 486 1933).

The Revenger's Tragedy. Antony Sher stars as Vindice, Nicholas Farrell as Lussurioso. Directed by Di Trevis. The Pit, Barbican.

The Shaughraun. Dion Boucicault's 1870s melodrama, set in the west of Ireland. Howard Davies directs. Stephen Rea stars as the Shaughraun. A great night out. Olivier, National Theatre. REVIEW ON P71.

South Pacific. Lively, enjoyable West End revival of one of Rodgers & Hammerstein's best musicals. With Gemma Craven, Emile Belcourt & Bertice Reading. Prince of Wales, Coventry St, W1 (839 5987, cc 240 7200).

The Strangeness of Others. Nick Ward directs his new play, set in contemporary London. Cottesloe, National.

The Tempest. Directed by Peter Hall. With Michael Bryant, Jennifer Hall & Tony Haygarth. Cottesloe, National.

'Tis Pity She's a Whore. Alan Ayckbourn directs Rupert Graves & Suzan Sylvester in a revival of John Ford's 17th-century play about a corrupt & ailing society. Olivier, National. REVIEWED MAY, 1988.

Twelfth Night. Roger Allam is Sir Toby Belch, John Carlisle Malvolio in the RSC's innovative production first seen at Stratford. Barbican.

Uncle Vanya. Michael Gambon, Greta Scacchi & Rachel Kempson are among a distinguished cast tackling the Chekhov classic. Vaudeville, Strand, WC2 (836 9987, cc). REVIEW ON P71.

Waiting for Godot. Alec McCowen & John Alderton are outstanding in the NT's first production of Samuel

Beckett's seminal play. Lyttelton, National Theatre.

Winnie. Abysmal musical celebrating Churchill's wartime persona, set in a Berlin light opera house in 1945. Robert Hardy & Virginia McKenna star, the musical director is Albert Marre & the show features new songs by Lionel Bart as well as a clutch of wartime melodies. Victoria Palace, Victoria St, SW1 (834 1317, 828 4735, cc).

The Winter's Tale. First production of the New Shakespeare Company's summer season of open-air theatre. Directed by David Gilmore. Open Air Theatre. SEE BACKSTAGE P.72.

Ziegfeld. Harold Fielding presents a multi-million-pound musical flop based on the life & work of the American theatrical impresario Florenz Ziegfeld. London Palladium, Argyll St, W1 (437 7373, cc). REVIEWED JUNE, 1988.

FIRST NIGHTS

Titus Andronicus. Deborah Warner's production stars Brian Cox in the title role & Estelle Kohler as Tamora. Opens June 29. The Pit, Barbican, EC2 (638 8891, cc).

Too Clever By Half. Ostrovsky's 19th-century comedy about a Russian con-man, directed by Richard Jones. Opens June 28. Old Vic, Waterloo Rd, SE1 (928 7616, cc 261 1821).

STAYERS

Beyond Reasonable Doubt. Queen's (734 1166); **Cats.** New London (405 0072); **Chess.** Prince Edward (734 8951); **Follies.** Shaftesbury (379 5399); **42nd Street.** Drury Lane (836 8108); **Kiss Me Kate.** Savoy (836 8888); **Les Liaisons Dangereuses.** Ambassador's (836 6111); **Me & My Girl.** Adelphi (836 7611); **Les Misérables.** Palace (434 0909); **The Mousetrap.** St Martin's (836



Humphrey Lyttelton plays Satchmo's hits at the Queen Elizabeth Hall



Sidney Nolan's *The Trial*, 1947, among paintings by the Angry Penguins at the Hayward

1443); *The Phantom of the Opera*, Her Majesty's (839 2244); *Run For Your Wife*, Criterion (930 3216); *A Small Family Business*, Olivier, National (928 2252); *Starlight Express*, Apollo Victoria (828 8665).

FRINGE

Between the Lines. Contrasting the experiences of women on the home front & injured soldiers in a military hospital in France during the First World War, this Bristol Express Theatre Company production seeks to highlight some of the extraordinary social upheavals of the period. June 28-July 16. Bridge Lane Theatre, Bridge Lane, SW11 (228 8828).

Big Time. Keith Reddin's angry look at American high finance & its involvement in under-developed regions of the world. Unlike the current spate of "money" plays, it stays out of the dealing-rooms & concerns itself instead with the effect of wheeler-dealing on ordinary people. July 5-30. Gate Theatre Club, 11 Pembridge Rd, W11 (229 0706).

A Bright Room Called Day. It is Germany in the early 30s & a group of intellectuals—writers, directors & actors—are faced with the question of whether to flee the country or stay & compromise. A provocative political piece from American playwright Tony Kushner that seeks to draw parallels with what is happening in the West today. Opens July 13. Bush, Shepherds Bush Green, W12 (743 3388).

The Cradle Will Rock. Jane Beeson's controversial play asks whether the maternal instinct is an instinct or a social construct. Opens July 5. Old Red Lion, 418 St John's St, EC1 (837 7816).

Façade. Frances de la Tour stars as the poet Edith Sitwell, reflecting on her family & childhood. A world première, written by William Humble & directed by Simon Callow. Until July 23. Lyric Studio, King St, W6 (741 2311, cc).

To Kill a Mockingbird. The classic anti-racist courtroom drama concerning a black farm-hand accused of the rape of a young white girl in Alabama in 1935. Directed by Kenneth Alan Taylor, in conjunction with the Nottingham Playhouse. June 30-Aug 13. Greenwich Theatre, Crooms

Hill, SE10 (858 7755, cc 853 3800). **Now & At The Hour Of Our Death.** Based on Neil McCafferty's *The Armagh Women* & presented by a new women's theatre group called Trouble & Strife. July 4-23. Young Vic Studio, The Cut, SE1 (928 6363, cc 379 4444).

The Recruiting Officer. George Farquhar's story of small-town life in Shrewsbury in 1706, as two determined women attempt to bring their lovers to heel during an army recruiting drive. Max Stafford-Clark directs. Opens July 26. Royal Court, Sloane Sq, SW1 (730 1745, cc).

CINEMA

The following films are expected to be showing in London or on general release at some time during the month. Programmes often change at short notice. Consult a local or daily newspaper for exact location & times.

The Couch Trip (15). Brisk, in parts hilarious comedy from Michael Ritchie about prison asylum inmate Dan Aykroyd who pretends to be a psychiatrist in order to escape & become host on a radio "dial-a-shrink" show. A variation on the *Trading Places* theme which, despite able support from Walter Matthau, cannot overcome the problem of tying the funny one-liners into a coherent whole. Opens July 22. Leicester Sq Theatre, WC2 (930 5252).

Deadly Pursuit (15). Sidney Poitier returns to the screens as an FBI agent (Stantin) in a thriller that promises much but never really gets going. Although much of the plot is cleverly worked, director Roger Spottiswoode is frustratingly unable to sustain the pace of the film's first half. Opens July 8. Warner West End, Leicester Sq, WC2 (439 0791, cc 439 1534).

Hairspray (PG). Director John Waters's camp tale of teenage life in Baltimore in 1962, starring Debbie Harry & the inimitable Divine in his last movie. Opens July 1. Screen on the Green, 33 Upper St, N1 (226 3520); Cannons Chelsea, 279 King's Rd, SW3 (352 5096), Oxford St, W1 (636 0310), Haymarket, W1 (839 1527). REVIEW ON P 72.

A Handful of Dust (PG). When the

married but bored Brenda (Kristin Scott Thomas) takes up with irredeemable roué John Beaver (Rupert Graves), the conventional family life of the upper-class Lasts is shattered. Charles Sturridge directs with the assurance displayed in his other Evelyn Waugh adaptation, *Brideshead Revisited*; the opulence of the 30s high-life never becomes twee. Visually a treat; impressive rather than oppressive.

It Couldn't Happen Here (15). Pet Shop Boys promo stretched out to make a feature film and cross-fertilised with a camp 60s movie along the way. Gareth Hunt, Joss Ackland & Barbara Windsor ham it up as Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe (the Boys themselves) lurch from one hit song to another by means of a hastily-constructed plot. The quality of the film never matches that of the music. Opens July 8. Cannons Oxford Street; Edgware Rd, W2 (723 5901); Panton St, SW1 (930 0631).

Planes, Trains & Automobiles (15). Steve Martin & John Candy in a comedy about two contrasting characters travelling home over Thanksgiving weekend.

Saigon (18). Crass attempt to relocate a buddy-buddy cop movie in war-torn Saigon. Gregory Hines & Willem Dafoe are military policemen conducting a murder investigation which leads them into conflict with the top brass, while Amanda Pays cameos as a French nun. The screenplay, co-written by director Christopher Crowe, leaves little to the imagination & much to be desired. Opens July 8. Leicester Sq Theatre.

September (PG). Downbeat drama from Woody Allen concerning a gathering of overwrought city-types, among them Mia Farrow, Denholm Elliott, Sam Waterstone & Dianne Wiest, who discover the pain of unrequited love as they spend the last days of summer together. Everybody is in love with everybody else; a situation identical to Allen's *Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* (1982), although this time around there are few laughs. It works, however, due to credible central performances. Opens July 1. Odeon Haymarket, Haymarket, SW1 (839 7697, cc).

Shy People (15). Andrei Konchalovsky's story of a journalist (Jill

Clayburgh) who moves out of New York with her daughter to explore the Louisiana bayou in an attempt to trace their family roots, finding out along the way that life in the backwoods is not as idyllic as she imagined. REVIEWED JUNE, 1988.

Starlight Hotel (PG). Stropky school-girl Kate Marshall (Greer Robson) runs away from home to try to make it across 1932 New Zealand to meet her father in Wellington; her journey takes an unexpected course when she hitches up with fugitive Pete Dawson (Peter Phelps). Sam (*Scarecrow*) Pillsbury's road movie has pace & charm, with the relationship between the two vagrants thoughtfully realised by Phelps & Robson—paternal at first, but with hints of something deeper as time goes by. Opens July 8. Cannon, Tottenham Court Rd, W1 (636 6148).

Suspect (15). Classy courtroom drama starring Cher as an overworked Public Defender assigned a murder case in which the suspect (Liam Neeson) is deaf & dumb & the facts don't add up. Dennis Quaid is the Washington lobbyist on jury service who starts (illegally) to help her sort it out. A good conspiracy, bags of tension & strong central performances, all tautly directed by Peter Yates.

Throw Momma From the Train (PG). Danny DeVito's first film as director/star is a remake of Hitchcock's classic suspense thriller *Strangers on a Train*, played as a black comedy. Also starring Billy Crystal, & Anne Ramsey as DeVito's monstrous mother—the stuff of murderous fantasies.

The Whales of August (U). Lindsay Anderson has crafted a delightful tale of two elderly sisters (Bette Davis & Lillian Gish). Their demanding relationship offers huge scope for Davis to be cantankerous, & Gish, seemingly as old as film itself, is superb as the patient Sarah. REVIEWED JUNE, 1988.

Wings of Desire (15). Wim Wenders won Best Direction at Cannes for this extraordinary tale of angels who descend to earth to observe the inhabitants of an unhappy Berlin. A Franco-German co-production with music from, among others, Nick Cave & Laurie Anderson. Opens June 24. Gate Cinema, Notting Hill Gate, W11 (727 4043); Lumiere, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (836 0691). REVIEW ON P 72.



Back again: Status Quo play Wembley



Second Stride dance at Sadler's Wells



Stephen Jones's *Colander Hat*, 1984, in *Fashion and Surrealism* at the V & A

EXHIBITIONS

OPENING

ALBEMARLE GALLERY

18 Albemarle St, W1 (493 7968).

Fred Ingrams. Fifth in a series of shows at the Albemarle celebrating "A New Generation of Painters". Works by Ingrams, 23, include lustful nudes in mixed media & landscapes inspired by travels in Egypt. July 5-16. Mon-Fri 10am-5.30pm, Sat 11am-1pm.

CRAFTS COUNCIL GALLERY

12 Waterloo Pl, SW1 (930 4811).

London/Amsterdam: New Art Objects from Britain & Holland. This Anglo-Dutch collaboration, as part of the William & Mary Tercentenary Festival, will concentrate on ceramics & jewellery by top artists including Helly Oestreicher & Gijs Bakker. All exhibits for sale. July 13-Sept 18. Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2-5pm.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

St Martin's Pl, WC2 (930 1552).

Shadowland: Gordon Anthony Photographs 1926-52. This first major retrospective of Anthony's work has as its core his internationally famous ballet shots of the 30s & 40s. July 22-Oct 16. Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. £1, concessions 50p.

WHITECHAPEL ART GALLERY

Whitechapel High St, E1 (377 0107).

Lucio Fontana Retrospective. The first comprehensive survey of Fontana's work to be shown in this country will include the large slit-canvas of the 50s & 60s that made his reputation as a leading innovator in post-war European art. July 8-Sept 18. Tues-Sun 11am-5pm, Wed 11am-8pm.

STILL SHOWING

HAYWARD GALLERY

South Bank, SE1 (928 3144).

Angry Penguins: Realist Painting in Melbourne in the 40s. This exhibition chronicles the struggle between two groups of artists in Melbourne. At the heart of the controversy was the lively magazine *Angry Penguins*. Until Aug 14. REVIEW ON P74.

Impressionism & the Modern Vision: Master Paintings from the Phillips Collection. From Old Masters through

Impressionism to more modern work from the private Phillips collection. Renoir, El Greco, Cézanne & Monet are among those represented. Until Aug 21. REVIEW ON P73.

Mon-Wed 10am-8pm, Thurs-Sat until 6pm, Sun noon-6pm. £3, concessions & everybody all day Mon & after 6pm Tues & Wed £1.50.

PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

5 & 8 Gt Newport St, WC2 (831 1772).

Joan Fontcuberta/Pere Formiguera: Fauna. Fantasy bestiary containing images of improbable species produced by manipulative techniques, exhibited to sound effects. Until July 23. Tues-Sat 11am-7pm.

ROYAL ACADEMY

Piccadilly, W1 (734 9052).

Cézanne: The Early Years 1859-72. An exploration of Cézanne's long & surprising process of self-discovery. Well worth seeing. Until Aug 21. £3, concessions & everybody Sun until 1.45pm £2. REVIEWED MAY, 1988.

Summer Exhibition. The Royal Academy's 220th annual open exhibition. Dull, with just a few surprises. Until Aug 7. £2.80, concessions & everybody Sun until 1.45pm £1.90. REVIEW ON P73.

DAILY 10AM-6PM.

TATE GALLERY

Millbank, SW1 (821 1313).

Late Picasso. An intriguing selection of Picasso's late work: paintings, sculptures, drawings & prints. Until Sept 18. Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 2-5.50pm. £3, concessions £1.50. REVIEWED JUNE, 1988.

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Cromwell Rd, SW7 (938 8500).

Fashion & Surrealism. A look at how Surrealism has inspired fashion design. Those represented include Elsa Schiaparelli, Thierry Mugler & Jean Paul Gaultier. The show, originated by Richard Martin, comes from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York where it was a great success. June 29-Aug 27.

Textiles of the Arts & Crafts Movement. Printed & woven fabrics representing designers such as William Morris, Walter Crane & Lewis F. Day. Until Sept 4.

Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 2.30-5.50pm. Voluntary donation, suggested £2, concessions 50p.

AFTER DARK

Please telephone to confirm details.

Apocalypse. Huge dance venue for leather-clad indie fans. Discs from the Fall & others. Fridays. Astoria, 157 Charing Cross Rd, WC2 (434 0403).

The Future. Dance club specialising in "Acid House" music, a cross between psychedelia & House. The hottest scene in London, but definitely one for the hyper-trendy. The Sanctuary, Hungerford Lane, WC2.

Hackney Empire. Consistently strong new-wave cabaret bills at this beautifully-restored Victorian music-hall. 291 Mare St, E8 (985 2424).

Jongleurs. Don't be put off by the TV series filmed here: the live atmosphere is much more up-beat. Mixed cabaret. Fri-Sun (best to book). Cornet, 49 Lavender Gdns, SW11 (585 0955).

The Red Neck Club. Refreshingly original idea: cajun, tex-mex & Latin-American dance sounds with spicy food to match. Wide variety of beers available. Fridays. Chiquitas Restaurant, 114 Crawford St, W1 (486 8701).

Reggae Night. Skank the night away at this popular club. Saturdays. Gossips, 69 Dean St, W1 (434 4480).

SUNDAY NIGHT AT THE TUNNEL PALLADIUM.

The best in alternative comedy, complete with open spots that generate the kind of savage heckling not seen since the early days of the Comedy Store. Harry "loadsamoney" Enfield's favourite venue. The Mitre, Tunnel Ave, SE10 (853 1918).

Tattershall Castle. Mainstream pop sounds at this floating disco on the Thames. Beware office parties taking over for an evening. Victoria Embankment, SW1 (839 6548).

JAZZ

The Louis Armstrong Anniversary Concert. Satchmo's hits brought to life by the Humphrey Lyttelton Band, with guests Wally Fawkes (clarinet) & Carol Kidd (vocals). July 19. Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, SE1 (928 3191, cc 928 8800).

Ted Curson. Only British dates for the highly-rated American trumpeter who learned his trade under the great

Charlie Mingus. July 6, 7. Bass Clef, 85 Coronet St, N1 (729 2440).

Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall Concert. Featuring the Bob Wilbur Big Band, resuscitating classic trad sounds on the 50th anniversary of the "Carnegie Blast". July 16. Barbican Hall, EC2 (638 8891, cc).

Mariano-Van't Hof Duo. Top US alto-saxophonist Charlie Mariano joins Dutch keyboard wiz Jasper Van't Hof to produce some of the hottest contemporary jazz around. July 24-28. Bass Clef.

Bobby McFerrin. Solo performance from the "human orchestra"—so named for his extraordinarily elastic vocal range. He sings, hums accompaniment (often improvising) & provides a bass-line by nudging himself sharply in the chest. Has to be seen to be believed. July 17. Victoria Palace, Victoria St, SW1 (828 2610).

Remy Ongala. Lively dance troupe from Tanzania preview their Womad show. July 15, 16. Bass Clef.

ROCK

Bros. Concerned soul from the immensely successful Peckham popsters, out to prove there's more to them than teenybop hype. Some tickets still available. June 30, July 1, 2. Hammersmith Odeon, W6 (748 4081).

David Byrne. The lanky one from Talking Heads here for a one-off with backing of a different kind—New Orleans jazz outfit Les Misérables. Sounds fascinating. Part of the ICA's Rock Week festival. July 2. Alexandra Palace, N22 (930 3647).

Pop Will Eat Itself. Grunge-rock from the vanguard of the "grebo" movement. Loud, anarchic & fun, (though rumour has it they are learning to play their instruments). July 23. Astoria, 157 Charing Cross Rd, WC2 (434 0403).

Status Quo. More comebacks than a squashball. July 6, 7. Wembley Arena, Middx (902 1234, cc 741 8989).

James Taylor. Return of a veteran. Laid-back but by no means clapped out. July 8, 9. Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, SW7 (589 8212, cc).

10,000 Maniacs. Perky guitar pop from the Creedence Clearwater Revival of the 80s. July 31. Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC1 (278 8916, cc).



The new D'Oyly Carte Opera Company perform *The Yeomen of the Guard* at the Cambridge Theatre



Jill Gomez sings both at the Proms and on the South Bank

CLASSICS

ALBERT HALL

Kensington Gore, SW7 (589 8212 9465, cc 379 4444).

Henry Wood Promenade Concerts. July 22-Sept 17; 7.30pm.

BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, Bach Choir, London Philharmonic Choir. John Pritchard conducts Verdi's Requiem. July 22.

Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Orchestra, under Leonard Bernstein, play his Songfest. July 24.

BBC Symphony Orchestra, Chorus & Singers, under John Pritchard, give the world premiere of Jonathan Lloyd's Symphony No 4. Also works by Debussy, Britten, Ravel. July 26.

Bournemouth Sinfonietta. Roger Norrington conducts Mozart's Haffner Symphony, Strauss's suite *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* & the world premiere of David Matthews's Cantiga for soprano & small orchestra. It will be sung by Jill Gomez, who commissioned the work. July 27.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Singers & Symphony Chorus, London Choral Society, under Charles Groves. Delius's Mass of Life. July 31.

BARBICAN HALL
EC2 (638 8891, cc).

London Symphony Orchestra. Neeme Järvi conducts two concerts. Bruch's Violin Concerto No 1, with Lydia Mordkovich, & Brahms's Symphony No 2, July 7, 7.45pm; Brahms's Symphony No 3 & Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos, with Katia & Marielle Labèque, July 10, 7.30pm.

Philharmonia Orchestra, American Festival Chorus, Brighton Festival Chorus. *The Water Goblin* by Dvořák & A German Requiem by Brahms. July 19, 7.45pm.

CITY OF LONDON FESTIVAL
Box office: St Paul's Churchyard, EC4 (236 5086/2801, cc).

Lunchtime recitals & evening orchestral & choral concerts in City churches & livery halls. July 3-20.

FESTIVAL HALL

South Bank Centre, SE1 (928 3191), cc 928 8800).

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. André Previn conducts two concerts with Anne-Sophie Mutter as soloist in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, July 2;

Mozart's Violin Concerto in G K216, July 3; 7.30pm.

South Bank Summer Organ Show. Popular works transcribed for organ, played by Adrian Lucas, July 10; Thomas Trotter, July 17; Wayne Marshall, July 24; 3.15pm.

Vladimir Ovchinnikov, first-prize winner in the Leeds Piano Competition, plays Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No 2 with the Philharmonia Orchestra. July 22, 7.30pm.

KENWOOD LAKESIDE

Hampstead Lane, NW3. Box office: Duke of York's Theatre, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (379 5533, cc).

Open-air concerts of popular music. July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 8pm.

MARBLE HILL RIVERSIDE

Richmond Rd, Twickenham. Box office: Duke of York's Theatre, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (379 5533, cc). Open-air concerts on the banks of the Thames. July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 7.30pm.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL

South Bank Centre.

John Ogdon gives the first complete London performance of Opus clavicembalisticum, a work for solo piano written in 1929 by Kaikhosru Sorabji, now 96 years old. July 14, 6.30pm.

Falla Firsts: Aquarius, conducted by Nicholas Cleobury, with Jill Gomez, soprano, & Triple Threat Dance Company, give staged performances of *El corregidor y la molinera* & *El amor brujo*. July 20, 21, 8pm.

Pickett's Pageant: Eight centuries of early music programmed by Philip Pickett & focusing on specific historical events or festivals such as the Pilgrim Road to Santiago & the Feast of Fools. July 23-Aug 7.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

SW1 (741 8989, cc).

London Festival Orchestra, under Ross Pople, end their cathedral classics with a programme of Handel, Vivaldi, De Falla, Mozart. July 7, 7pm.

OPERA

CITY OF LONDON FESTIVAL

Box office: St Paul's Churchyard, EC4 (236 5086/2801, cc).

L'Incoronazione di Poppea. Arleen Auger sings Poppea in Stefan Janski's production for London City Opera. Richard Hickox conducts a new per-

forming edition of the score. The cast includes Della Jones & James Bowman. Christ Church, Spitalfields. July 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27, 29.

GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL OPERA

Glyndebourne, Lewes, E Sussex (0273 541111).

Die Entführung aus dem Serail. Gianna Rolandi sings Constanze, with David Rendall & Kurt Streit alternating as Belmonte. June 25, July 2, 7, 9.

Kát'a Kabanová. Début production by Nikolaus Lehnhoff. June 28, 30.

REVIEW ON P74.

Falstaff. Bernard Haitink & Peter Hall continue their Verdi cycle. Claudio Desderi sings Falstaff. June 29, July 1, 3, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24, 28.

La traviata. Revival of Peter Hall's production, conducted by Sian Edwards. Fiorella Pediconi sings Violetta, with Walter MacNeil as Alfredo & Timothy Noble as Germont père. July 13, 16, 19, 23, 26, 30.

NEW D'OYLY CARTE OPERA COMPANY

Cambridge Theatre, Earlham St, WC2 (379 5299, cc 240 7200).

Gilbert & Sullivan's operas return to London for a nine-week season.

Iolanthe, directed by Peter Walker, *The Yeomen of the Guard,* directed by Christopher Renshaw, both designed by Nadine Baylis & conducted, by Bramwell Tovey. Opens July 12.

ROYAL OPERA

Covent Garden WC2 (240 1066/1911, cc).

Elektra. Gwyneth Jones celebrates the 25th anniversary of her Covent Garden début by singing the title role for the first time with the company, under Gerd Albrecht. June 27, 30, July 2, 5, 8.

Lohengrin. René Kollo sings Lohengrin, Cheryl Studer & Mechthild Gensendorf share the role of Elsa. Jeffrey Tate conducts. July 1, 9, 13.

Don Giovanni. Colin Davis returns to conduct a strong cast headed by Thomas Allen as Giovanni, Ferruccio Furlanetto as Leporello, Margaret Price as Anna, Kiri té Kanawa as Elvira. July 7, 12, 15, 19, 23.

Boris Godunov. Robert Lloyd again sings the title role in Andrei Tarkovsky's cinematic production. Vladimir Popov makes his début as the Pretender. July 14, 16, 20, 22.

Season ends on July 23.

DANCE

Australian Ballet. After an absence of 12 years, the company returns as part of the Bicentennial Australia to the World programme. Season opens with director Maina Gielgud's stunning production of *The Sleeping Beauty*, with decor & costumes by Hugh Colman. July 26 (Royal Gala performance in the presence of the Queen), 27, 29, 30 (m&e). Triple Bill: *Beyond Twelve, Orpheus, Forgotten Land*. July 28. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (240 1066/1911, cc).

Cha Cha Cha. Regular forum for innovative dance, this month featuring a multi-media piece by Andrew Hammons on the subject of male bonding, & a new work from Claire Russ, *Carrying the Lotus Shoots Home*, based on experiences in China. July 1. Chisenhale Dance Space, 64 Chisenhale Rd, E3 (981 6617).

Kirov Ballet. Last seen in Britain 18 years ago, the troupe begin their London dates with a sparkling rendition of *Giselle*, directed by Oleg Vinogradov. July 25-30. Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (836 3161, cc).

Krisztina de Chatel Dance Company presents a new work, *Staunch*, inspired by visits to Ghana & Senegal. Five male dancers move to music by John McDowell which is a mix of African percussion, saxophone, piano, cello & marimba. July 13-16. Riverside Studios, Crisp Rd, W6 (748 3354).

Nayee Kiran Festival of South Asian Dance & Music. Nayee Kiran, Hindi for "new ray of light", is a unique project encompassing classical, folk & popular dance from all over the sub-continent. Highlights include Natya Padam on the 14th, & Shobana Jeyasingh on the 15th. July 11-17. The Hawth Arts Centre, Hawth Ave, Crawley, West Sussex (0293 553636).

Royal Ballet School. The annual performance includes two specially choreographed pieces: *Soirée Musicale* by MacMillan (music by Britten) & *En Bateau* by Bintley (music by Debussy). July 21. Royal Opera House.

Second Stride. The troupe of eight perform Ian Spink's highly acclaimed *Weighing the Heart* to music by Man Jumping. July 7-9. Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC1 (278 8916, cc).

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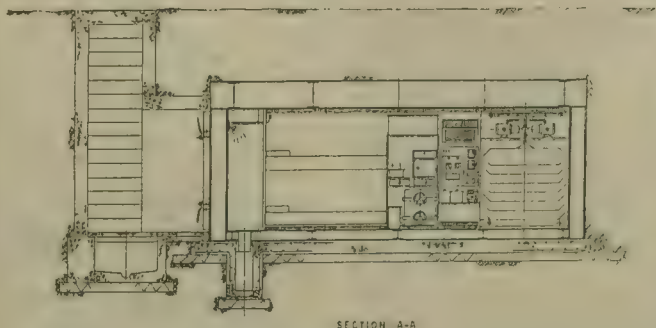
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LIST OF THE MONTH

KIDS' LONDON

School's out again. Here are a few off-beat ideas to keep offspring occupied: **1 Boating** at Crystal Palace Park, SE26. Huge model dinosaurs peering from the foliage around the lake make this a real adventure. Open until Sept, 12.30-6.30pm. Rowing boats £1.30 per person, £1 deposit.

2 Children's Day on the South Bank, Jubilee Gardens, SE1. Stilt-walkers, face-painters & fireworks at this one-off fun day. July 16, noon-6pm.

3 Hackney City Farm, 1A Goldsmiths' Row, E2 (729 6381). Amid the tower-blocks of East London, a working farm including ponies, sheep, goats, pigs, & bees. Tues-Sun 10am-6pm. Free.

4 Horniman Museum, London Rd, Forest Hill, SE3 (699 2339). Arts & crafts from around the world. Nature trails in surrounding gardens. Mon-Sat 10.30am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. Free.

5 ICA Children's Cinema Club, The Mall, SW1 (930 3647). Free membership includes newsletter. Sat & Sun 3pm. Adults £3, children £1.50.

6 Polka Children's Theatre, 240 The Broadway, SW19 (543 4888). Shows twice daily at this purpose-built 300-seater. Until July 30, *Alice in Wonderland*, performed by marionettes. Tues-Sat 2pm, 5.30pm. Closed Sept. £1.50-£3.50 depending on show.

7 Richmond Swimming Pool Wild Waters, Chertsey Rd, Richmond, Surrey (940 8461). The four slides, among them the "Corkscrew" & the "Black Hole", are irresistible to dare-devil youngsters. Mon-Sat 10am-8pm. Adults £2.80 (slide & main pool), six- to

nine-year-olds £2 (plus 10p for locker). **8 Riding in Hyde Park**, Bathurst Riding Stables, 63 Bathurst Mews, W2 (723 2813). For children of six or over. Tues-Fri 7-8am, 11am-3pm; Sat 9-11am, 2-3pm; Sun 9-11am, 1.30-2.30pm. Hacking £9 an hour, lessons £10 an hour.

9 Rock-Laser Show at the Laserium, London Planetarium, Marylebone Rd, NW1 (486 2242). Cascading multi-coloured lasers with music by Sting, Genesis & others. Aimed at the over-fives. Tues-Sun, 6pm, 7.45pm, 9.15pm. Adults £3.75, children £2.75.

10 Thames Barrier, Unity Way, Eastmoor St, SE18 (854 1373). The giant floodgates, which will automatically be raised if the Thames threatens to flood, are an impressive sight & the Visitors' Centre has plenty of working models. One for the more technically-minded nipper. Daily 10.30am-6pm. Free.

OTHER EVENTS

Cricket: Benson & Hedges Cup, July 9. Lord's, NW8 (289 1611).

Festival of Street Entertainers. Everything from juggling & stilt-walking to jazz-dance. The standard is usually superb. July 16, 17. Covent Garden Piazza, WC2 (240 5451).

Henley Royal Regatta, June 29-July 3. Henley-on-Thames, Oxon (0491 572153).

Here's Health 88. Alternative medicine & natural-living exhibition, featuring health foods, natural beauty & skin-care products. July 14-17. Olympia 2, Hammersmith Rd, W14 (385 1234).

Polo: Cartier International. The Prince of Wales leads the British team against France. July 24. The Guards' Polo Club, Windsor Great Park, Englefield Green, Surrey (0784 34212).

BOOKS: THIS MONTH'S BEST SELLERS

HARDBACK NON FICTION

1 (4) **Wainwright in Scotland** by Alfred Wainwright. BBC, £14.95.

2 (—) **Wisden Cricketers' Almanack 1988** edited by G. Wright. John Wisden, £16.50.

3 (—) **Moonwalk** by Michael Jackson. Heinemann, £9.95. The book that tells—almost nothing!

4 (3) **The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers** by Paul Kennedy. Unwin Hyman, £18.95.

5 (—) **Yamani: The Inside Story** by Jeffrey Robinson. Simon & Schuster, £14.95. Rise & fall of an oil sheik.

6 (—) **The Drowned and the Saved** by Primo Levi. Michael Joseph, £10.95. Penetrating, remarkably balanced look at the rulers of Auschwitz.

7 (2) **Making it Happen** by John Harvey-Jones. Collins, £12.95. Unpompous industrial leader explains how to get there.

8 (—) **An Ocean Apart** by David Dimbleby & David Reynolds. Hodder & Stoughton, £14.95. Anglo-American relations as seen on TV.

9 (—) **The Spanish Armada** by Colin Martin & Geoffrey Parker. Hamish Hamilton, £14.95.

10 (1) **Stalker** by John Stalker. Harp, £12.95. The honest cop tells all.

PAPERBACK NON FICTION

1 (2) **Hip & Thigh Diet** by Rosemary Conley. Arrow Books, £2.50.

2 (5) **The Blind Watchmaker** by Richard Dawkins. Penguin, £4.95. Powerful look at the theory of evolution.

3 (1) **The Fatal Shore** by Robert Hughes. Pan Books, £4.99. Robust picture of Australia.

4 (4) **The Last Emperor** by Edward Behr. Futura, £3.95.

5 (8) **Between the Woods and the Water** by Patrick Leigh Fermor. Penguin, £3.95. Splendid sequel to *A Time of Gifts*.

6 (—) **Wisden Cricketers' Almanack 1988** edited by G. Wright. John Wisden, £14.50.

7 (7) **Fatherhood** by Bill Cosby. Bantam Books, £2.50.

8 (—) **King of Fools: the Life of Edward VIII** by John Parker. Futura, £3.95. Controversial account of the Duke of Windsor's life.

9 (9) **Dancing on My Grave** by Gelsey Kirkland & Greg Lawrence. Penguin, £3.95. A ballerina's fight against drugs to reach the top again.

10 (3) **White Mischief** by James Fox. Penguin, £3.95. The truth about high life in wartime Kenya.

HARDBACK FICTION

1 (5) **The Icarus Agenda** by Robert Ludlum. Grafton Books, £11.95. Exciting story set in the Middle East.

2 (—) **Rock Star** by Jackie Collins. Heinemann, £10.95.

3 (1) **The Bonfire of the Vanities** by Tom Wolfe. Jonathan Cape, £11.95. Sharp look at the New York jet set.

4 (2) **The Weeping & the Laughter** by Noel Barber. Hodder & Stoughton, £11.95. The Russian Revolution breaks up a princely family.

5 (8) **The Cold Moons** by Aeron Clement. Kindredson Publishing, £10.95. Badger's-eye view of life.

6 (—) **A Far Cry From Kensington** by Muriel Spark. Constable, £9.95. Miss Spark at her glittering best.

7 (—) **Summer's Lease** by John Mortimer. Viking, £10.95. The dangers of taking a Tuscan holiday villa, deftly told.

8 (—) **King of the Murgos** by David Eddings. Bantam Press, £10.95. Second book of the Mallorcon series.

9 (—) **The Fifth Child** by Doris Lessing. Jonathan Cape, £9.95. The one who wrecks the happy family.

10 (3) **The Tommyknockers** by Stephen King. Hodder & Stoughton, £11.95. Another protracted King nightmare.

PAPERBACK FICTION

1 (3) **Destiny** by Sally Beauman. Bantam Books, £3.95.

2 (9) **The Maid of Buttermere** by Melvyn Bragg. Sceptre, £3.95.

3 (1) **The Parson's Daughter** by Catherine Cookson. Corgi, £3.95.

4 (—) **Winter Hawk** by Craig Thomas. Fontana, £3.95. Is the Russian peace initiative honest? Here's one answer.

5 (2) **The Ladies of Missaloughi** by Colleen McCullough. Arrow Books, £2.50. A readable novella.

6 (—) **Skallagrigg** by William Horwood. Penguin, £4.50. Old-fashioned quest ending in a new-fangled computer.

7 (—) **Consider Phlebas** by Iain Banks. Futura, £4.95. A shot at SF by the brilliant author of horror stories.

8 (—) **The Wrench** by Primo Levi. Sphere, £3.99. Cunningly-wrought, picaresque novel.

9 (7) **Empire of the Sun** by J. G. Ballard. Granada, £2.95.

10 (—) **Rage** by Wilbur Smith. Pan Books, £3.99. The South African struggle by a master storyteller.

Brackets show last month's position. Information from Book Trust. Comments by Martyn Goff.

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Letter from LAFAYETTE STREET

Graydon Carter, New York

Mr Rupert Murdoch's egregiously profitable communications empire became all the more so this past spring when he turned over control of his money-losing *New York Post* to a heretofore retiring real estate developer named Peter Kalikow. The sale of the paper was forced by a government edict forbidding one party from owning both a newspaper and a television station in the same city. Murdoch happened to have both a paper and a TV station in New York, and the station, an important link in his efforts to cobble together a fourth American television network—behind ABC, CBS and NBC—proved to be the more valuable of the two.

In its way the *Post* had become Murdoch's own private Vietnam—a draining bit of business in which he knew he was never going to win and for which there seemed no avenue for face-saving withdrawal. Circulation, the most telling indicator of a newspaper's vitality, had shrunk by more than a third between early 1987 and early 1988. A decade and a half after Murdoch first acquired the *Post*, its losses, which once amounted to \$50 million a year, were running at about \$24 million per annum.

Needless to say, great torrents of alligator tears were shed by Murdoch as he bemoaned the government's forcing him—forcing him mind you—to give up this moribund and costly effort. And he did give it up, the selling price of \$37.6 million was little more than the value of the *Post*'s Manhattan real estate. Ownership of the paper will nevertheless bestow upon Kalikow what it bestowed upon Murdoch—social and political currency far beyond the magnitude of the actual investment. For although nobody of any smarts or import reads the *Post*, the politics industry believes that the paper's mixture of saucy, primal headlines ("HEADLESS BODY IN TOPLESS BAR") and reckless, right-wing demagoguery is the stuff to

stir the voluble and impressionable masses. Politicians of all stripes are therefore willing to leap through hoops to curry favour with whoever owns or edits the *Post*; and there lies much, if not all, of the paper's attraction to its owner. That is, unless it can be turned around—which is precisely the sort of future that Kalikow claims to see for the paper. He envisions a three-headed *Post* that will still appeal to its current, blue-collar readership as well as to young urban professionals and business executives longing for something poorly-written to read during their commute home to Greenwich.

He won't of course admit it, but in buying the paper Kalikow will be treading a proven social path in New York, along which ruthless, socially-repellent wealth accumulators acquire venerable media properties and in jig time find themselves to be the very life of the party, surrounded by their new circle of important "friends". Leonard Stern, who owns Hartz Mountain, the bird food and pet accessory empire, did just that when he bought *The Village Voice*.

Mortimer Zuckerman, the shortish former Canadian, had developed much of downtown Boston, tucked away almost half a billion dollars and was known by nobody. Then he bought *The Atlantic Monthly*, one of a handful

of respectable "think" magazines in the country, for a few million dollars. All of a sudden, he was not a 5 foot 8 inch builder with a lisp, but a respected magazine publisher and man about town, with every eligible woman from Arianna Stassinopoulos to Gloria Steinem vying for a spot on his arm. He won a further place-setting for himself at Washington dinner tables by buying up the distant number three in news-weeklies, *US News & World Report*, and installing himself as editor-in-chief and regular columnist. Unlike other businessmen-turned-media conglomerateurs, however, Zuckerman has displayed unusual flair for publishing and has dramatically improved the two publications under his stewardship.

The *Post*'s new proprietor claims to recoil from the sort of spotlight that Zuckerman and others have so assiduously sought. He professes to abhor press attention of any kind. We shall see. Kalikow certainly has not shied away from having his picture taken with his recent staff acquisitions, publisher Peter Price and executive editor Jane Amsterdam. For the \$200,000 or more a year that Kalikow will be paying Amsterdam to turn around the fortunes of the *Post*, he gets the talents of a woman of wide-ranging ability

and an impressive journalistic lineage. Among other venues, Jane Amsterdam has worked at *New Times*, *New York*, *The American Lawyer*, *The Washington Post* (where she was known for jumping up whenever executive editor Ben Bradlee entered the room, throwing her arms around him and shouting, "Benito! Benito!") and *Manhattan, inc.*, of which she was the founding editor. Ironically, the mission that Kalikow has set for her is one that was undertaken by Clay Felker, her successor at *Manhattan, inc.* In the early 1980s Felker produced *Tonight*, an upscale

supplement to the *Post*'s chief rival, *The Daily News*. Although well-written and always surprising, *Tonight* never won over the readers its owners had envisioned.

Peter Price, the new publisher of the *Post*, has nowhere near Amsterdam's experience. In fact, he has never worked at a newspaper before. Shortly after he was named publisher, Price asked me and my two partners at *SPY* magazine, Kurt Andersen and Tom Phillips, if we would stop by his office to hear a mutually-beneficial plan that he had been formulating. Although *SPY* is a modest success and the *Post* considerably less than that, Price blithely proceeded for the first half-hour to expound at length as to what was wrong with our magazine, what we had to do to boost circulation (which had fairly doubled in the previous half year) and how the high-end, \$90,000-a-year, white-collar readership of *SPY* and the sandhogs and secretaries who scan the *Post* were remarkably similar. I'm afraid I dozed off shortly after that and missed the second half, otherwise I would certainly tell you the plan his mind had been so labouring over ●





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